

OFFICIAL LETTERS

TO THE HONORABLE

AMERICAN CONGRESS,

Written, during the WAR between the

UNITED COLONIES AND GREAT-BRITAIN,

BY HIS EXCELLENCY

GEORGE WASHINGTON,

COMMANDER IN CHIEF OF THE CONTINENTAL FORCES;

NOW

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

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VOL. II.

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M,DCC,XCVI.

George Washington
President of the United States

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OFFICIAL LETTERS
FROM
GENERAL WASHINGTON
TO CONGRESS.

SIR,

Trenton, January 1, 1777.

YOUR resolves of the twenty-seventh ultimo were transmitted me last night by messieurs Clymer, Morris, and Walton. The confidence which Congress have honored me with by these proceedings, has a claim to my warmest acknowledgments. At the same time I beg leave to assure them that all my faculties shall be employed to direct properly the powers they have been pleased to vest me with, and to advance those objects, and only those, which gave rise to this honorable mark of distinction. If my exertions should not be attended with the desired success, I trust the failure will be imputed to the true cause,—the peculiarly distressed situation of our affairs, and the difficulties I have to combat,—rather than to a want of zeal for my country, and the closest attention to her interests, to promote which has ever been my study.

On monday morning I passed the Delaware myself; the whole of our troops and artillery, not till yesterday, owing to the ice which rendered their passage extremely difficult and fatiguing. Since their arrival, we have been parading the regiments whose time of service is now expired, in order to know what force we should have to depend on, and how to regulate our views accordingly. After much persuasion and the exertions of their officers, half or a greater proportion of those from the eastward have consented to stay six weeks on a bounty of ten dollars. I feel the inconvenience of this advance, and I know the consequences which will result from it:—but what could be done?—

Pennsylv.

Pennsylvania had allowed the same to her militia:—the troops felt their importance, and would have their price. Indeed, as their aid is so essential, and not to be dispensed with, it is to be wondered they had not estimated it at a higher rate. I perceive that Congress, apprehensive of this event, had made unlimited provision for it.

General Mifflin is at Bordentown with about eighteen hundred men, and general Cadwallader at Croswix's, with about the same number.—We are now making our arrangements, and concerting a plan of operations, which I shall attempt to execute as soon as possible, and which I hope will be attended with some success.

As to the number and situation of the enemy, I cannot obtain certain intelligence: but, from the accounts most to be relied on, they have collected the principal part of their force, from Brunswick and the neighboring posts, at Princeton, where they are throwing up some works. The number there is reported to be from five to six thousand; and it is confidently said they have sent the chief part of their baggage to Brunswick. It is added, that general Howe landed at Amboy a day or two ago with a thousand light troops, and is on his march from thence.

I have sent into different parts of Jersey, men of influence to spirit up the militia, and flatter myself that the many injuries they have received will induce some to give their aid. If what they have suffered does not rouse their resentment, they must not possess the common feelings of humanity. To oppression, ravage, and a deprivation of property, they have had the more mortifying circumstance of insult added:—after being stripped of all they had without the least compensation, protections have been granted them for the free enjoyment of their effects.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

P. S. I have not been able to procure returns of our force, owing to our situation, I suppose that about two or three and twenty hundred passed with me, which number is now reduced to fifteen or sixteen hundred. No estimate of our force can be formed from the number of regiments: many of them, by reason of sickness, cannot turn out more than a hundred men.

SIR,

Pluckemin, January 5, 1777.

I HAVE the honor to inform you, that, since the date of my last from Trenton, I have removed with the army under my command

command to this place. The difficulty of crossing the Delaware on account of the ice made our passage over it tedious, and gave the enemy an opportunity of drawing in their several cantonments and assembling their whole force at Princeton. Their large picquets, advanced towards Trenton,—their great preparations, and some intelligence I had received,—added to their knowledge that the first of January brought on a dissolution of the best part of our army,—gave me the strongest reasons to conclude that an attack upon us was meditating.

Our situation was most critical, and our force small. To remove immediately was again destroying every dawn of hope which had begun to revive in the breasts of the Jersey militia; and to bring those troops which had first crossed the Delaware and were lying at Croswix's under general Cadwallader, and those under general Mifflin at Bordentown (amounting in the whole to about three thousand six-hundred), to Trenton, was to bring them to an exposed place. One or the other however was unavoidable:—the latter was preferred, and they were ordered to join us at Trenton, which they did, by a night-march, on the first instant.

On the second, according to my expectation, the enemy began to advance upon us; and, after some skirmishing, the head of their column reached Trenton about four o'clock, whilst their rear was as far back as Maidenhead. They attempted to pass Sanpink creek which runs through Trenton, at different places; but, finding the fords guarded, halted and kindled their fires.—We were drawn up on the other side of the creek.—In this situation we remained till dark, cannonading the enemy, and receiving the fire of their field-pieces which did us but little damage.

Having by this time discovered that the enemy were greatly superior in number, and that their design was to surround us, I ordered all our baggage to be removed silently to Burlington soon after dark; and at twelve o'clock, after renewing our fires and leaving guards at the bridge in Trenton, and other passes on the same stream above, marched by a round-about road to Princeton where I knew they could not have much force left, and might have stores. One thing I was certain of,—that it would avoid the appearance of a retreat (which was of course, —or to run the hazard of the whole army being cut off)—whilst we might by a fortunate stroke withdraw general Howe from Trenton, and give some reputation to our arms.—Happily we succeeded.—We found Princeton about sun-rise with only three regi-

regiments and three troops of light-horse in it, two of which were on their march to Trenton. These three regiments, especially the two first, made a gallant resistance, and, in killed, wounded, and prisoners, must have lost five hundred men: upwards of one hundred of them were left dead in the field; and, with what I have with me, and what were taken in the pursuit and carried across the Delaware, there are near three hundred prisoners, fourteen of whom are officers, all British.

This piece of good fortune is counterbalanced by the loss of the brave and worthy general Mercer, colonels Hazlet and Potter, captain Neal of the artillery, captain Fleming who commanded the first Virginia regiment, and four or five other valuable officers, who, with about twenty-five or thirty privates were slain in the field. Our whole loss cannot be ascertained, as many who are in the pursuit of the enemy (who were chased three or four miles) are not yet come in.

The rear of the enemy's army lying at Maidenhead (not more than five or six miles from Princeton) was up with us before our pursuit was over: but as I had the precaution to destroy the bridge over Stoney-brook (about half a mile from the field of action), they were so long retarded there as to give us time to move off in good order for this place. We took two brass field pieces; but for want of horses could not bring them away. We also took some blankets, shoes, and a few other trifling articles, burned the hay, and destroyed such other things as the shortness of the time would admit of.

My original plan, when I set out from Trenton, was, to have pushed on to Brunswick: but the harrassed state of our troops (many of them having had no rest for two nights and a day), and the danger of losing the advantage we had gained by aiming at too much, induced me by the advice of my officers, to relinquish the attempts; but, in my judgment, six or eight hundred fresh troops upon a forced march would have destroyed all their stores and magazines,—taken (as we have since learned) their military chest, containing seventy thousand pounds,—and put an end to the war. The enemy from the best intelligence I have been able to get, were so much alarmed at the apprehension of this, that they marched immediately to Brunswick without halting, except at the bridges (for I also took up those on Millstone, on the different routs to Brunswick), and got there before day.

From the best information I have received, general Howe has left no men either at Trenton or Princeton. The truth of this I am endeavoring to ascertain, that I may regulate my movements accordingly.

The

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The militia are taking spirits, and, I am told, are coming in fast from this state: but I fear those from Philadelphia will scarcely submit to the hardships of a winter campaign much longer, especially as they very unluckily sent their blankets with their baggage to Burlington. I must do them the justice however, to add that they have undergone more fatigue and hardship, than I expected militia (especially citizens) would have done at this inclement season.—I am just moving towards Morristown, where I shall endeavor to put them under the best cover I can:—hitherto we have been without any; and many of our poor soldiers barefoot, and ill clad in other respects.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Morristown, January 7, 1777.

I AM happy to inform you that the account of general Mercer's death, transmitted in my last, was premature, though it was mentioned as certain by many who saw him after he was wounded. By intelligence from Princeton yesterday evening, he was alive, and seemed as if he would do well:—unhappily he is a prisoner. Had it not been for the information I had of his death, I would have tried to have brought him away, though I believe it could not have been effected.

The enemy have totally evacuated Trent and Princetowns, and are now at Brunswic on the several posts on the communication between that and Hudson's river, but chiefly at Brunswic. Their numbers and movements are variously reported: but all agree that their force is great. There have been two or three little skirmishes between their parties and some detachments of militia, in which the latter has been successful, and made a few prisoners. The most considerable was on Sunday morning near Springfield, when eight or ten Waldeckers were killed and wounded, and the remainder of the party, (thirty-nine or forty) made prisoners, with two officers, by a force not superior in number, and without receiving the least damage.

The severity of the season has made our troops, especially the militia, extremely impatient, and has reduced the number very considerably. Every day more or less leave us. Their complaints, and the great fatigues they had undergone, induced me to come to this place, as the best calculated of any in this quarter to accommodate and refresh them. The situation is by no means

means favorable to our views: and, as soon as the purposes are answered for which we came, I think to remove, though I confess I do not know how we shall procure covering for our men elsewhere.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, Morristown, Jan. 9, 1777.

I AM honored with yours of the first instant, inclosing sundry resolves relating to this and the northern army. Those that respect my department shall be properly attended to.

I am obliged by your notice of colonel Baylor, on whom I shall confer the command of horse to which you recommend him.—When the uniform for the regiment is fixed upon, a horse properly caparisoned shall be provided and presented to colonel Baylor.—There were no horses of any figure or value taken at Trenton.

Since I wrote you last, the enemy have withdrawn all their out-garrisons, and centured their whole force at and near Brunswick; but whether with an intention to make a stand there or make another push towards Philadelphia, I cannot yet determine.—Upon the evacuation of Elizabeth-town, general Maxwell fell upon the enemy's rear, and made seventy prisoners and took a parcel of baggage.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, Morristown, Jan. 12, 1777.

I AM honored with yours of the sixth, inclosing several resolves of Congress respecting an exchange to be proposed between general Lee and the Hessian field-officers taken at Trenton. Colonel Ralle died the day after the action; and we left one of the majors so ill of his wounds, that I am in doubt of his recovery. I can however make an offer of all that remain, in exchange for general Lee, except one whom you order to be proposed for colonel Allen. If the offer is rejected by general Howe, I shall think myself then at liberty to remonstrate to him on his treatment of general Lee. If he will not exchange him, he should at least admit him to his parole, as we have ever done their prisoners who have fallen into our hands.

I understand from undoubted authority that they intend to try

try the general by a court-martial, as a deserter from their service, pretending that his resignation was never accepted of. But I shall inform general Howe, that, if any such step is taken under so shallow and illegal a pretext, and their sentence should extend either to affect his life or liberty, they may depend upon the most severe and adequate retaliation upon our part.

The enemy have made no move since my last. By every account, they begin to be distressed particularly for forage, of which there is little or none remaining in the small circle they possess, except salt hay.

By letters from general Heath, of the ninth, he was beginning to move down towards Kingsbridge with the troops from New-England. This must add to the distress of the enemy, who will, by this measure, be deprived of the subsistence they formerly drew from West-Chester and the counties to the northward of York-Island.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, Morristown, Jan. 14, 1777.

I Embrace this opportunity, by Mr. Hopkins, of informing you that the enemy remain upon their old ground at Amboy and Brunswick. Our accounts still confirm their want of forage, which I hope will increase.—If their horses are reduced this winter, it will be impossible for them to take the field in the spring.

General Warner, with two regiments from Massachusetts, is arrived here: general Heath, with the remainder of the troops from that state, has by this time began to move down towards Kingsbridge.

I this day intend to send in a flag with letters to lord and general Howe upon the subject of general Lee's exchange, and remonstrating against the severe treatment of our prisoners. I inclose you copies of both, for your inspection and approbation.—I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, Morristown, Jan. 17, 1777.

I HAVE not had the honor of any of your favors since I wrote to you on the fourteenth instant.—No material alterations have happened in this quarter.—The enemy, from every account, mean to make Brunswick their advanced post for this

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winter. They are endeavoring to draw in all the forage they can get; in the course of which, they have daily skirmishes with our advanced parties: but I think, do what they will, they must be distressed greatly before the winter is over.

By a late resolve of Congress, the towns of Carlisle in Pennsylvania, and Brookfield in Massachusetts, are fixed upon for the proper places to erect elaboratories, and lay up magazines of military stores. Upon communicating this resolve to general Knox who will have the principal direction of these matters, he was of opinion that Hartford in Connecticut would be on many accounts more convenient for that purpose than Brookfield, particularly in respect to buildings, which are already erected, and, though not such as are immediately fit for the uses they are intended, may be easily converted to them.—General Knox, and others whom I have consulted upon the occasion, also think that Yorktown will be full as safe, and more convenient than Carlisle.—If these two alterations should, upon a reconsideration, appear to you in the same light, and no steps should have been taken towards carrying matters into execution, I should be glad that you would, by a new resolve, permit me to direct the works to be carried on at the places last mentioned.

Since I began this letter, your favor of the tenth was delivered to me, inclosing sundry resolves of Congress to which I shall pay due attention, and shall inform * * * and * * * of their dismissal from the service of the states.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, Morristown, Jan. 19, 1777.

THE fluctuating state of an army composed chiefly of militia, bids fair to reduce us to the situation in which we were some little time ago,—that is, of scarce having any army at all, except reinforcements speedily arrive. One of the battalions from the city of Philadelphia goes home to-day, and the other two only remain a few days longer upon courtesy. The time for which a country brigade under general Mifflin came out is expired, and they stay from day to day by dint of solicitation, their numbers much reduced by desertions. We have about eight hundred of the eastern continental troops remaining of twelve or fourteen hundred who at first agreed to stay,—part engaged to the last of this month, and part to the middle of next. The five Virginia regiments are reduced to a handful of

of men, as are colonel Hand's, Smallwood's and the German battalion.—A few days ago general Warner arrived with about seven hundred Massachusetts militia engaged to the fifteenth of March.

Thus you have a sketch of our present army, with which we are obliged to keep up appearances before an enemy already double to us in numbers, and who, from every account are withdrawing their troops from Rhode-Island, to form a junction of their whole army, and make another attempt either to break up ours, or penetrate towards Philadelphia,—a thing by no means difficult now, as the ice affords an easy passage over the Delaware.

I do not yet know what effect general Heath's moving down towards New-York will have.—Yesterday morning a considerable firing was heard, which seemed to be about Kingsbridge. I am in hopes that his appearance on that quarter with a pretty large force will oblige them to withdraw part of theirs from Jersey, to secure the city of New-York, which, by late accounts, is weakly garrisoned.—General Heath has all the eastern and York militia with him, except the small brigade under general Warner which I mentioned before, one regiment of Connecticut, stopped at Providence in Rhode-Island, and a number (how many I do not know) requested by general Schuyler to be sent to Tyconderoga.—If it should appear that they are regardless of the diversion made by general Heath, and persist in their plan of drawing their whole army together in Jersey, I must order him over with all his troops, except as many as are necessary to garrison the forts and guard the passes in the Highlands.

I have ordered away every officer that could be spared,—some to recruit, and some to collect the scattered men of the different regiments, who are dispersed almost over the continent: for, the vast numbers sent to the hospitals at different times, few ever returned after they got well.

As militia must be our dependence till we can get the new army raised and properly arranged, I must entreat you to continue your endeavours with the state of Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia, to turn out every man they possibly can, and for some longer time than they have generally stipulated for. If they agree for a month or any limited time, it should commence from the time they actually join the army, and not from the time they leave their homes: otherwise the marching backwards and forwards consumes the term of engagement.

I think these demands of aid should be made as quietly as the nature of the case will admit of, especially at this time
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when we are deceiving our enemies with false opinions of our numbers: for, to boast of our superiority in that respect on one hand, and to call publicly on the people for assistance on the other, is an impropriety too glaring:—indeed it has been already noticed in some publications that I have seen from New-York.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, Morristown, Jan. 20, 1777.

I AM favored with yours of the fifteenth instant, with the sundry resolves inclosed in it. If that respecting the continental currency is carried strictly into execution, it cannot fail of fully re-establishing its credit.

I have no objection to the three gentlemen who are recommended for field-officers in the new Hampshire regiment: they seem fully entitled to it, as they have raised the regiment. I will furnish them with commissions from the date of their appointment, when applied to for that purpose.

There is something particular in the application of colonel Dubois and his officers for the sum of five hundred and thirteen dollars and two-thirds. They have been commissioned provided they should raise the men; but, from their own pay-abstract, it appears that fourteen officers only brought twenty-five men into the field. As they certainly did not comply with their agreement, I would, after stating the matter as it really was, submit it to Congress who have the disposal of the public money.

I have perused the petition of monsieur Faneuil and other French gentlemen. If they could raise such a regiment as they propose, it would certainly be useful: but I have no conception that there are Canadians enough to be found even for a regiment of the common number, much less of two thousand three hundred and forty-seven, which is the number proposed. I know, neither colonel Livingston nor colonel Hazen could ever complete their Canadian regiments when they had the country open to them. As I would give encouragement to foreigners of real merit, I would put the thing upon this footing:—if monsieur Faneuil can procure a sufficient number of officers to fill a regiment of the common size, and they can give any assurances of being able to raise the men I would grant them commissions.

I would beg leave to remark here, that, except we can throw
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the many foreigners who have been commissioned in our army, into a corps together, they will be entirely useless, as they can neither converse with officers nor men in any other kind of regiment.

I am so well assured that you would not recommend doctor Petts to succeed doctor Stringer in the northern department except you had sufficient proof of his abilities in the medical line that I readily concur with you in the appointment.

I have received a piece of information which I am afraid is true,—and that is, that the British cruisers have taken a French vessel with a large parcel of cannon and mortars on board. I know such a one was expected, and therefore more readily credit the account.

I am, sir, with respect and esteem, &c. G. W.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, Morrisfown, Jan. 22, 1777.

MY last to you was on the twentieth instant. Since that, I have the pleasure to inform you that general Dickinson, with about four hundred militia, has defeated a foraging party of the enemy of an equal number, and has taken forty waggons, and upwards of a hundred horses, most of them of the English draft breed, and a number of sheep and cattle which they had collected. The enemy retreated with so much precipitation, that general Dickinson had only an opportunity of making nine prisoners. They were observed to carry off a good many dead and wounded in light waggons.—This action happened near Somerset court-house on Millstone river. General Dickinson's behavior reflects the highest honor upon him: for, though his troops were all raw, he led them through the river middle-deep, and gave the enemy so severe a charge, that, although supported by three field-pieces, they gave way, and left their convoy.

I have not heard from general Heath, since the firing near Kingsbridge last saturday; which I cannot account for, unless the North-river should have been rendered impassible by the ice. But the account of his having surpris'd and taken Fort-Independence on friday night last comes so well authenticated by different ways, that I cannot doubt it. It is said that he took four hundred prisoners in that fort, and that he invested Fort-Washington on saturday, which occasioned the firing.—This is brought out by three of our officers who made their escape from New-York on sunday, and is confirmed by a spy who
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went into Amboy, who says an express had arrived at Amboy from New-York, with an account of the loss of Fort-Independence, and calling for a reinforcement to protect the city : in consequence of which, a number of troops had gone over.— I have sent in spies to Brunswic and Amboy to know the truth of this : and if it appears that they have weakened themselves to reinforce New-York, I shall probably make some attempt upon them, if we have men enough left to do it.

I shall be glad to know what stock of small-arms you at present have, and what are your expectations shortly. The necessity that we have been and are now under, of calling in and arming the militia, scatters our armory all over the world in a manner : their officers are so irregular that they generally suffer their men to carry home every thing that is put into their hands, which is forever lost to the public. The new-raised regiments will call for a great number of arms ; and I do not at present see how they are to be supplied.

I would again beg leave to recall the attention of Congress to the appointment of general officers. I will not suppose the nomination of them is postponed upon a saving principle, because the advantage in having proper officers to examine the pay-rolls of their several regiments, and compare them with the returns of their brigades,—to see that the regiments are provided with what is proper, and that no more than a sufficiency is allowed,—to keep officers to their duty, and not, while the spirited officer is encountering all the fatigues and hardships of a rigorous campaign, suffer a number of others, under various frivolous pretences and imaginary sicknesses, to enjoy themselves at the public expense at their own firesides :—I say, if the appointments are withheld upon parsimonious principles, the Congress are mistaken : for I am convinced, that, by the correction of many abuses which it is impossible for me to attend to, the public will be benefited in a great degree in the article of expense.—But this is not all.—We have a very little time to do a very great work in. The arranging, providing for, and disciplining a hundred and odd battalions is not to be accomplished in a day ; nor is it to be done at all with any degree of propriety, when we have once entered upon the active part of a campaign. These duties must be branched out, or they will be neglected, and the public injured. Besides, were the brigadiers appointed, they might be facilitating the recruiting service ; they would have time to get a little acquainted with their brigades, the wants of them, and ease me of the great weight and burden which I at present feel.

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On whom the choice will or ought to light, I cannot undertake to say. In a former letter I took the liberty of submitting to the consideration of Congress the propriety of appointing, out of each state, brigadiers to command the troops of that state,—thinking, as a distinction is now fixed, a spirit of emulation might arise by this means. At any rate I shall take the liberty of recommending general Cadwallader as one of the first for the new appointments. I have found him a man of ability, a good disciplinarian, firm in his principles, and of intrepid bravery. I shall also beg leave to recommend colonel Reed to the command of the horse, as a person, in my opinion, every way qualified: for he is extremely active and enterprising: many signal proofs of which he has given this campaign. For the rest, the members of Congress can judge better than I can: I can only say, that, as the army will probably be divided in the course of the next campaign, there ought, in my opinion, to be three lieutenant-generals, nine major-generals, and twenty-seven brigadiers:—in other words, there ought, at least to be a brigadier to every four regiments, and a major-general to every three brigades.—The lieutenant-generals will, I presume, be appointed out of the oldest major-generals, and the major-generals from the oldest brigadiers. Nine brigadiers will then be to nominate.

I forgot before this to inform Congress, that, including the regiment of light dragoons from Virginia, and colonel Sheldon's to be raised in Connecticut, I have only commissioned officers for four regiments. I was willing to try how these could be equipped before I put more officers into commission. It is apprehended we shall find difficulty in providing necessaries or even horses for these four regiments: if we should not, I shall immediately set about the residue. Colonel Baylor, colonel Moylan (who, as volunteer has remained constantly with the army since his discontinuance in the quarter-master's department, and colonel Sheldon, command the three new regiments of light dragoons.

The treasury has been for some time empty, and the army has labored under the greatest inconvenience for the want of money. The recruiting service is particularly injured by this, as many officers are now waiting only for bounty-money. I have also complaints from the eastward of the want of money to carry on their recruiting service.—If we are not supplied with that necessary article, all matters must be at a stand. I must therefore, beg that, if Mr. Palfrey has not been already supplied with a large sum, it may be done with the utmost expedition, and

and that you will endeavor to keep up the supply by constantly sending on smaller parcels.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

P. S. I did not recollect major-general Lincoln in the provincial service of Massachusetts. He is an excellent officer, and worthy of your notice in the continental line.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, Morristown, Jan. 26, 1777.

I WAS last night honored with yours of the eighteenth instant, inclosing a letter from the state of New-York to Congress. From the particular situation of their state in regard to their being totally deprived of commerce, they certainly must stand in need of the assistance of the other states to provide them with clothing and every thing necessary for the equipment of their forces; and it ever was my intention to allow them a full proportion of the clothing purchased to the eastward, whenever it came to hand. Little or none of it has reached this army, though in the greatest want, and exposed to the severities of a winter campaign.

The convention have in one instance already provided for themselves out of the public stock by stopping and making use of twenty-six bales of clothing coming on from the eastward to the army here. As this was done without consulting me, I took the liberty of desiring them not to do the like in future; not that I meant to deprive them of their share, but because it disappointed me of many articles which I stood in immediate want of, and had not provided from other quarters. But you may be assured, that, whenever returns are to be made of the whole stock of clothing, they shall have their proportion, and more than that—allowance for their peculiar situation.

I am amazed to hear complaints of the hospital on the east side of Hudson's-river. Doctor Morgan, with most of his mates has been constantly there since I left it with the main body of the army. It is in vain however to look back upon past misfortunes. I will not pretend to point out the causes; but I know matters have been strangely conducted in the medical line. I hope your new appointment, when it is made, will make the necessary reform in the hospital, and that I shall not, the next campaign, have my ears, and eyes too, shocked with the complaints and looks of poor creatures perishing for want of proper care either in the regimental or hospital surgeons.

I agree with the convention in the expediency of obstructing
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the passage of the North-river in some place between the mouth and the Highlands. We have found that our labor and expense has been thrown away in endeavoring to do it below, where the channel is amazingly wide and deep: but, from the slight view I have had of the river above, I think the passage may be easily obstructed, and defended by proper fortifications, as the river is so narrow that no vessel going up could possibly escape the fire. I am no judge of what can be done towards fitting out the frigates at Poughkeepsie:—that must be left to the gentlemen of the marine committee.

The hint given by the convention of New-York, of the necessity and utility of a commissary of forage, had struck me before, and had been mentioned by general Mifflin, whose department of quarter-master-general must be eased of part of the load which is at present thrown upon it. He is obliged in many instances to act entirely out of his proper line; and instead of being confined to the duty of quarter-master-general, is also waggon-master, and forage-master-general.—I have wrote to two persons that I think qualified to fill the office of waggon-master; and I hope one of them will accept.—That of commissary of forage shall be attended to.

The want of accurate maps of the country which has hitherto been the scene of war has been of great disadvantage to me. I have in vain endeavored to procure them, and have been obliged to make shift with such sketches as I could trace out from my own observation and that of gentlemen around me. I really think, if gentlemen of known character and probity could be employed in making maps (from actual survey) of the roads,—the rivers, and bridges and fords over them,—the mountains, and passes through them,—it would be of the greatest advantage.

I had, previous to the receipt of your letter, wrote to general Howe, and proposed the fixing an agent for prisoners at New-York. I have not received an answer: but if he accedes to the proposal, I shall appoint Mr. Lewis Pintard.

I am sorry that I am obliged to contradict the report of the taking of Fort-Independence as mentioned in my list. I believe the evacuation of some detached redoubts gave rise to the report.—I have not heard from general Heath since the fourteenth instant, which I am amazed at. I am quite in the dark as to his numbers, and what progress he has made.

On the twenty-third, a party of four hundred of our men, under colonel * * *, fell in with two of the regiments of the enemy, convoying a number of waggons from Brunswick to Am-

boy. Our advanced party under colonel Parker engaged them with great bravery upwards of twenty minutes, during which time the colonel commandant was killed, and the second in command mortally wounded. The people living near the field of action say their killed and wounded were considerable. We lost only two men, who were made prisoners. Had colonel * * * come up with the main body, colonel Parker and the other officers think we should have put them to the rout, as their confusion was very great and their ground disadvantageous. I have ordered * * * under arrest, and shall bring him to trial to answer for so extraordinary a piece of conduct.

Reinforcements come up so extremely slow, that I am afraid I shall be left without any men before they arrive. The enemy must be ignorant of our numbers, or they have not horses to remove their artillery, or they would not suffer us to remain undisturbed. I have repeatedly wrote to all the recruiting officers, to forward on their men as fast as they could arm and clothe them: but they are so extremely averse to turning out of comfortable quarters, that I cannot get a man to come near me, though I hear from all parts that the recruiting service goes on with great success. It would be well if the board of war, in whole department it is, would issue orders for all officers to equip and forward their recruits to head-quarters with the greatest expedition.

By a resolve of Congress passed some time ago, general Schuyler is directed to apply to me for ninety-four tons of powder,—a quantity which it is impossible I should have by me, and for which I do not know where to direct him to apply. I could wish that returns were made to me of the quantity of powder on hand, and where it is to be found, that I may not be at a loss at any time of emergency.

Since the resignation of colonel Reed, the important office of adjutant-general has been left unfilled (I mean as to a principal), and I am much at a loss how or where to find a person in every way capable and proper to execute the office. My inclinations lead me to confer the appointment upon a major Morris: but ample testimonials should be produced, and full proof of fidelity ought to be made, before an office of so high trust should be conferred upon a person in a manner a stranger to me. I only know major Morris from a short personal acquaintance, and from report: he never even brought a letter of recommendation to me. From his conversation and from the accounts I have received from others, he is a man of considerable military abilities; and, from his behavior in two instances,

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ces, he is a man of bravery and conduct. His story is simply this,—that he left the British service in disgust, upon not receiving a promotion to which he was justly entitled. Perhaps some gentlemen of Congress may know more about him, or may be able to make such inquiries as might satisfy them as to the safety and propriety of appointing him. I have no other motive for wishing him a preference than that I think him the properest person that has come under my notice, provided all matters before mentioned were cleared up.—I shall wait the result of a determination of Congress before I proceed further in this appointment: and I wish to be favored with their advice as speedily as possible; for the remains of the old army is much disarranged for want of a good adjutant-general, and the formation of the new in a great measure depends upon an able officer in that line.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, Morristown, Jan. 31, 1777.

I HAVE none of your favors un-answered at present.—There is such a demand upon me from all quarters for money, which I am unable to answer, that I cannot help again pressing you to send on a supply. The recruiting service is almost at a stop here for want of money; and governor Trumbull writes me word that it is totally so in Connecticut. He adds that their loan officers cannot proceed in their business for want of proper check-books and notes: but that, if they were furnished with them, they could soon take in a sufficient quantity to answer their purposes.

I shall be glad to be informed whether I have a right to draw warrants upon the loan-officers in the different states.—The states of Connecticut advanced colonel Sheldon, at my request, ten thousand pounds lawful, to raise his regiment of horse. For their reimbursement they desired me to give them a draught upon the loan-office: but, not knowing whether I had a right to draw upon that fund, I deferred it till I heard from you.

I must beg you to write to the assemblies of the different states, and insist upon the passing a law to inflict a severe and heavy penalty upon those who harbor deserters, knowing them to be such. Our army is shamefully reduced by desertion; and, except the people in the country can be forced to give information when deserters return to their old neighborhoods, we shall

shall be obliged to detach one half of the army to bring back the other.

I have a letter from general Heath, of the twenty-fourth instant. He was at and near Kingsbridge with his army. I do not find that he is likely to do more than to draw the attention of the enemy that way, and to cut them off from forage, of which they are in great want.—The troops had not returned from Rhode-Island, by the last accounts, but were daily expected.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Head-Quarters Morrisstown, Feb. 5, 1777.

I AM honored with yours of the twenty-fourth of January, with sundry resolves of Congress, and a petition of monsieur Pellissier's inclosed. I am not the proper [*person*] to refer the petition to, as I am no judge of his merit as an engineer, having never had an opportunity of seeing any of his performances. At any rate I do not see the necessity of appointing him or any other person principal engineer at Ticonderoga: for that would exclude any other, though of superior abilities, from being sent there. Besides, as a corps of engineers will in all probability be soon established, monsieur Pellissier's rank can then be settled with more propriety.

I forgot to mention in any of my former letters that I had appointed captain Nathaniel Guest of Virginia to the command of a regiment to be raised upon the frontiers of Virginia and Carolina; and I have directed him, if possible, to bring a company or two of Cherokee Indians. If they can be procured, they will answer two valuable purposes,—one, as excellent scouts, the other that they will be in fact hostages, and will secure the good behavior of their nation.

Major Bland, commandant of the Virginia horse, has desired to know whether there is not a necessity of giving a bounty and re-enlisting his regiment as continental troops. They were enlisted to serve in the colony; and the men were with some difficulty prevailed upon to march hither: but the major thinks they would be entirely reconciled upon receiving the bounty.

I received a letter from Mr. Chase, desiring I would appoint proper persons to make inquiry into and take dispositions concerning the behavior of the British and foreign troops in Jersey. This would be an endless task, as their line of march is

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marked with devastation, and is a thing of such public notoriety that it demands no further proof.

I remonstrated with general Howe upon the treatment of our wounded at Princeton. You will see by the inclosed letter from him, that he disavows and detests the proceeding: but I fear that too much encouragement is given to such barbarous behavior by the British officers; for, in a late skirmish, in which sir William Erskine commanded, lieutenant Kelly of the fifth Virginia regiment was slightly wounded in the thigh; but, before he could get off the field, he was overtaken and murdered in a most cruel manner. General Stephen informed me that he would write to sir William, and inform him, that, unless such practices were put a stop to, our soldiers would not be restrained from making retaliation.

By a letter from general Heath, of the thirtieth of last month, I find that he had decamped from the neighborhood of Kingbridge, and removed back towards the White-Plains. His reasons for doing so were that the troops could not stand the inclemency of the weather, and that he feared the troops expected from Rhode-Island would land upon his back. I have however directed him to leave a body of light troops under an active officer, in order to harass their foraging parties, and to cover our own who are to remove as much of the forage from West-Chester county as they can: and, after leaving as many men as will secure the passes in the Highlands, the remainder are to be sent over here to join me; for I am apprehensive that the enemy are reinforcing themselves at Brunswick.

I shall to-morrow send out parties from every quarter, to remove all the waggons, horses, cattle and sheep, or as many as possible, from the neighborhood of the enemy's lines. They are to attend particularly to the horses: for if we can reduce those that they at present have, and can hinder them from getting fresh ones from the adjacent country it will be impossible for them to move their artillery and waggons forward, should they incline to make another push towards Philadelphia.

I observe by your last resolves that the militia of Baltimore, Hartford, and Cecil counties in Maryland, are ordered out and to march this way. Let me entreat you to suffer none to go forward to Philadelphia but what are equipped with arms, accoutrements and blankets: they hurt the service much by taking those things only for a short time from the continental troops, many of whom would otherwise be enabled to take the field.

The secretary of the board of war has transmitted me extracts

tracts of general Schuyler's letters in which he calls pressing for some general officers to be sent to his assistance. This will shew you the necessity of immediately making the promotions recommended in mine of the twenty-second of January: for at present I cannot spare a general officer from this quarter without injuring the service.

Nothing of consequence has happened since I wrote to you last, except a skirmish on the first of this month, five or six miles from Brunswick-landing, between our advanced parties (about seven hundred in the whole) and upwards of two thousand of the enemy, under sir William Erskine. The heat of the engagement was [*borne by*] colonel Scott of the first Virginia regiment, who, with about a hundred men, beat back two hundred of the British grenadiers. Several other officers behaved with great spirit; but there is some reason to suspect that colonel * * *, who commanded our main body, did not behave altogether as he ought. I have ordered a court upon him, that the matter may be fairly canvassed, and that he may stand condemned or acquitted by the evidence of those who were present.

Colonel * * *, who was under arrest upon a charge of cowardice, broke his parole and went over to Bucks-county, I suppose with an intent to make his escape: but I dispatched a troop of light-horse after him, who brought him back yesterday: and he is to take his trial on friday.

The small-pox has made such head in every quarter, that I find it impossible to keep it from spreading through the whole army in the natural way. I have therefore determined, not only to inoculate all the troops now here that have not had it, but shall order Dr. Shippen to inoculate the recruits as fast as they come in to Philadelphia. They will lose no time, because they will go through the disorder while their clothing, arms and accoutrements are getting ready.

From the first institution of civil government, it has been the national policy of every precedent state to endeavor to engage its members to the discharge of their public duty by the obligation of some oath: its force and happy influence has been felt in too many instances, to need any arguments to support the policy or prove its utility. I have often thought the states have been too negligent in this particular, and am more fully convinced of it from the effect general Howe's excursion has produced in New-Jersey.—An oath is the only substitute that can be adopted to supply the defect of principle.—By our inattention in this article, we lose a considerable cement to our

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own force, and give the enemy an opportunity to make the first tender to the oath of allegiance to the king. Its baneful influence is but too severely felt at this time. The people generally confess that they were compelled to take protection, and subscribe the *Declaration*: yet it furnishes many with arguments to refuse taking any active part: and further they alledge themselves bound to a neutrality at least. Many conscientious people who were well-wishers to the cause, had they been bound to the states by an oath, would have suffered any punishment rather than have taken the oath of allegiance to the king; and are now lost to our interest for want of this necessary tie.—Notwithstanding the obligation of the *Association*, they do not conceive it to have the same effect as an oath.—The more united the inhabitants appear, the greater difficulty general Howe will have in reconciling them to regal government, and consequently the less hope of conquering them.—For these reasons and many more that might be urged, I should strongly recommend every state to fix upon some oath or affirmation of allegiance to be tendered to all the inhabitants without exception, and to outlaw those that refuse it.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, Morristown, Feb. 11, 1777.

I WAS yesterday waited upon by two French gentlemen, monsieur Romand de Lisle, and Robillard. The first produced a commission signed by you in November last, appointing him a major of artillery: but, by the inclosed letter from him to me, he claims much higher rank under the promise of Congress,—that of commandant of the continental artillery.—Whether any such promise was made, I leave you to determine.

Robillard claims a captaincy of artillery: but, upon what he grounds his pretensions, I do not know. I never saw him but once before; and that was upon his way from Boston to Philadelphia.

You cannot conceive what a weight these kind of people are upon the service, and upon me in particular. Few of them have any knowledge of the branches which they profess to understand; and those that have, are entirely useless as officers, from their ignorance of the English language.—I wish it were possible to make them understand, when commissions are granted to them, that they are to make themselves masters of the English

English language in some degree before they can be attached to any particular corps.

I am, sir, with the greatest respect, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, Morristown, Feb. 14, 1777.

SINCE I had the honor of addressing you on the fifth instant, no event of an important and interesting nature has occurred, unless the successes of our parties in foraging and bringing off horses, waggons, and some fat cattle and sheep, which were contiguous to and around the enemy's lines, are considered as such. I then mentioned that I had such a scheme in contemplation, which was happily accomplished the next day without any loss. The enemy in turn have made frequent efforts in that way, but with little success. Whenever they made the attempt, it never failed to produce a skirmish. They have been common of late, but with little damage to either side.

We have certain intelligence that they have drawn the greatest part of their troops from Rhode-Island, and are told that part of them have landed on Staten-Island and at Amboy, with a view of augmenting their force at Brunswick.

Colonel * * *, agreeable to the information contained in my last, has been tried by a court-martial, and cashiered. The proceedings and sentence I directed to be transmitted to the secretary of the war-office, and to the printers of this state and Virginia, to be published.

General Lincoln is just arrived with a regiment of Massachusetts militia, about two hundred and fifty. This, he says, is succeeded by three more, which will make in the whole near eighteen hundred: but in this I think he must be mistaken, unless those on the march are much fuller and larger than what they usually are. The whole are of the troops that were with general Heath.

General Knox, by a letter of the first instant, informs me, that, on mature inquiry and examination, he finds Springfield to be more convenient and much better calculated for an elaboratory and cannon-foundery, than any other part of the New-England states. He adds that a quantity of copper, tin, and other useful materials, can be had there; and that the necessary works and preparations, from these and other advantages, can be accomplished at least three or four months sooner there than any where else. In consequence of his opinion, which I esteem of weight, particularly in this instance,—and knowing the impor-

importance of, and how essential these establishments are,—I have ventured to order the works to be begun there, without regard to what had been done at Brookfield, which was of but little consequence. The former, besides the many advantages mentioned by general Knox, stands on Connecticut-river, and has a good navigation: yet is entirely secure against any attempts of the enemy, being twenty miles above Hartford, where the river is narrow, and too shoal to admit vessels that can give the least annoyance.—As nothing but the good of the service could have led to this measure, I trust it will be approved.

I have wrote to the assembly of Massachusetts state and the convention of New-Hampshire, requesting their good offices and exertions to promote the raising of their regiments as expeditiously as possible, and to forward the whole of the quotas first exacted from them, to Ticonderoga. Their contiguity to that post more than to any other,—the importance of it, and general Schuyler's apprehensions that the enemy may attempt to pass the lake (if not on the ice) as soon as it is open,—added to the great trouble, expense, and loss of time it will save in marching them elsewhere, and others there, who are much more distant and remote,—induced me to determine so. I find the council of the former, on general Schuyler's earnest application, before my letter reached them, had determined to send four regiments as soon as they could be completed. I only wish the whole may be made up in a short time, and that their arrival may be early enough to prevent those inconveniences and fatal consequences which the want of a sufficient force in that quarter would subject us to, were the enemy to pass the lakes at this time.

Mr. James Mease is now here in consequence of being appointed clothier-general. He is adjusting a plan for answering the end of his appointment, and making an estimate, to be laid before Congress or their secret committee, of such clothes as may be necessary to import for the army.

It is with much concern that the situation of our affairs obliges me to mention so frequently the want of money, especially when I am persuaded every means are used to furnish it. Our distress on this account is great indeed; and the injury the service receives, almost inconceivable:—not a day, an hour, or scarcely a minute passes, without complaints and applications on this head. The recruiting the regiments is most materially retarded by it.

Ten o'clock, P. M.—Just now a flag returned, that went to

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Brunswick

Brunswic to-day, who brought the inclosed letters from general Lee, which I do myself the honor to transmit you, with a copy of one to myself.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, Morristown, Feb. 14, 1777.

I DO myself the honor to inclose you a plan drawn up by doctor Shippen in concert with doctor Cochran, for the arrangement and future regulation of the general hospital. As this plan is very extensive, the appointments numerous, and the salaries affixed to them at present, large, I did not think myself at liberty to adopt any part of it before I laid it before Congress for their approbation. I will just remark, that, though the expense attending an hospital upon the inclosed plan will be very great, it will in the end not only be saving to the public, but the only possible method of keeping an army a foot.

We are now, at an enormous bounty, and with no small difficulty, recruiting an army of upwards of a hundred battalions. The ensuing campaign may, from the same causes, prove as sickly as the last: and if the hospitals are in no better condition for the reception of the sick, our regiments will be reduced to companies by the end of the campaign; and those poor wretches who escape with life will be either scattered up and down the country, and not to be found, or if found, totally enervated and unfit for further duty. By these means not only the bounty is lost, but the man is lost also: and I leave you to judge whether we have men enough to allow of such a consumption of lives and constitutions as have been lost the last campaign. For my own part I am certain, that, if the army which I hope we shall have in the field this year is suffered to moulder away by sickness as it did the last, we must look for reinforcements to some other places than our own states.

The number of officers mentioned in the inclosed plan I presume are necessary for us, because they are found so in the British hospitals: and, as they are established on the surest basis,—that of long experience under the ablest physicians and surgeons,—we should not hesitate a moment in adopting their regulations, when they so plainly tend to correct and improve our former want of method and knowledge in this important department.

The pay affixed to the different appointments is, as I said before, great, and perhaps more than you may think adequate to the

the service. In determining upon the sum that is to be allowed to each, you ought to consider that it should be such as will induce gentlemen of character and skill in their profession to step forth, and in some manner adequate to the practice which they have at home: for, unless such gentlemen are induced to take the care and management of our hospitals, we had better trust to the force of nature and constitution, than suffer persons entirely ignorant of medicine to destroy us by ill-directed applications.

I hear from every quarter that the dread of undergoing the same miseries for want of proper care and attention when sick, has much retarded the new enlistments, particularly to the southward. This is another reason for establishing our hospitals upon a large and generous plan: for we ought to make the service as agreeable and enticing as possible to the soldiery, many of whom (especially when we call forth the militia) not only quit the comforts but the luxuries of life.

A few days ago doctor * * * sent me the inclosed manuscript, which is a vindication of his conduct, upon which he desires a court of inquiry may be held. I transmit it to you by his direction. As I do not know what particular charges were alledged against him, I can say nothing to it or about it. You will find a plan of his also inclosed, for the better regulation of the hospital: but I think all his hints are included in doctor Shippen's plan.

As no time is to be lost in appointing the necessary officers, fixing upon the proper places for hospitals, and many other preparations, I could wish that Congress would take this matter under their immediate consideration, and favor me with their sentiments thereon as soon as possible.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, Morristown, Feb. 20, 1777.

THE principal design of this is to inform you that we have strong reasons to believe that the enemy are on the point of making some push. What their object is,—whether to beat up our quarters and to extend their own, to make a large forage and collection of provender of which they are in great want, or to turn their views towards the Delaware,—is a matter of uncertainty; but it seems probable that one of these things they have in contemplation. Such of their troops as have returned from Rhode-Island have landed at Amboy, and, with

with them several pieces of heavy artillery. General Howe is come over too, and, it is said lord Percy. Their number at Brunswic and the landing-place, before the arrival of this last reinforcement, was estimated from seven to eight thousand.

I have ordered the utmost vigilance and attention to be observed at our several posts, to guard against surprises, and every preparation to be made that the weak and feeble state of our little army will admit of. At this time we are only about four thousand strong,—a force, you will suppose, unequal to a successful opposition, if they were not militia, and far too small for the exigencies of our affairs. It is impossible to obtain exact returns, though they are daily called for,—owing to the frequent and almost constant departure of some of the corps.

Colonel Neilson of Brunswic, with a detachment of militia, on the morning of the eighteenth, surprised major Stockdon, whom he took with fifty-nine privates of general Skinner's corps, killing four, and bringing away the arms of the whole, with some blankets. This about balances the loss of a militia guard which a party of British troops took last week in Monmouth, near the Hook.

I wish to be informed how the regiments that are raising are to be armed, and of the provision that has been made for the same. I have reason to fear, indeed I am convinced, that there is a great deficiency in many, if not in the whole of the states, in this article: every letter that I receive from them mentions their want, and calls for supplies.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, Morristown, Feb. 26, 1777.

MONSIEUR Fanéuil, who some time ago laid a plan before you for raising and officering a corps of Frenchmen, waited upon me yesterday. His success, as I expected, has been small in enlisting or rather engaging Canadians. I cannot find that he has met with more than thirty or forty who would be willing to serve with him. He is now upon another scheme,—that of raising, arming, and clothing a number of men in the French islands.—To grant a commission of that kind is without the extent of my powers, and I have therefore desired him to go forward, and lay his proposals before Congress. If they appear feasible they may be adopted: but I would beg leave to observe that one precaution will be necessary, that is, that the commissions of monsieur Fanéuil and his officers should depend upon the perfor-

performance of their agreement for raising any certain number of men.

I have often mentioned to you the distress I am every now and then laid under by the application of French officers, for commissions in our service. This evil, if I may call it so, is a growing one: for, from what I learn, they are coming in swarms from old France and the islands. There will therefore be a necessity of providing for them or discountenancing them. To do the first is difficult; and the last, disagreeable, and perhaps impolitic if they are men of merit:—and it is impossible to distinguish these from mere adventurers, of whom, I am convinced, there are the greatest number. They seldom bring more than a commission and passport, which, we know, may belong to a bad as well as a good officer.

Their ignorance of our language, and their inability to recruit men, are unsurmountable obstacles to their being ingrafted into our continental battalions: for our officers, who have raised their men, and have served through the war upon pay that has hitherto not borne their expenses, would be disgusted if foreigners were put over their heads:—and I assure you, few or none of these gentlemen look lower than field-officers' commissions. To give them all brevets, by which they have rank and draw pay without doing any service, is saddling the continent with a vast expense: and to form them into corps, would be only establishing corps of officers; for, as I said before, they cannot possibly raise any men.

Some general mode of disposing of them must be adopted; for it is ungenerous to keep them in suspense, and at great charge to themselves: but I am at a loss how to point out this mode.—Suppose they were told in general, that no man could obtain a commission, except he could raise a number of men in proportion to his rank. This would effectually stop the mouths of common appliers, and would leave us at liberty to make provision for gentlemen of undoubted military character and merit, who would be very useful to us as soon as they acquired our language.

If you approve of this, or can think of any better method, be pleased to inform me as soon as you possibly can: for, if I had a decisive answer to give them, it would not only save me much trouble, but much time, which I am now obliged to bestow in hearing their different pretensions to merit, and their expectations thereupon.

I inclose you the papers which monsieur Fanéuil originally

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laid before the council of Massachusetts: they may be of use if you enter into a negotiation with them.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, Morristown. Feb. 23, 1777.

CONGRESS having resolved that several regiments of cavalry should be raised to form a part of their army, I beg leave, through you, to lay before them the inclosed list of officers which appear necessary to be appointed to each corps, and which they will be pleased to establish. At the same time I should suppose it highly expedient to fix their pay and that of the privates. There is now one regiment in service, and three more recruiting: this makes it indispensably necessary that it should be done. Applications are constantly making, to know what the pay is, and objections raised against the service for want of due information.

I have transmitted a list of such pay as seemed to be thought reasonable for part of the officers to receive when colonel Sheldon's regiment was directed to be levied, and a copy of the memorandum made at that time. This, colonel Sheldon conceived, would not be more than adequate to their services, trouble, and expense, and which in some degree was founded on the opinions of other gentlemen of whom inquiry was made upon the subject. I did not fix it in the instances where it is set down with certainty, as the memorandum will shew. A criterion, by which I was also governed upon that occasion, was the resolve appointing Mr. Sheldon lieutenant-colonel commandant with the rank and pay of colonel. From thence I attempted to proportion that of some other officers.—Upon the whole I think it should be settled without further loss of time, and with the earliest attention of Congress to be had to it.

Our delicate and truly critical situation, for want of a sufficient force to oppose the enemy who are now ready, and, before many days elapse, will take the field, induced me to expect that the troops raising in the southern states, and intended for this army, would march in companies or half-companies as they were made up, without waiting for their regiments to be complete. Policy strongly suggested the propriety of the measure, and I requested it: but, to my great anxiety and surprise, I am told that this line of conduct is totally neglected, though a great number of recruits are actually engaged. I must entreat Congress to interpose again with their most pressing applications,

cations and commands that this expedient may be adopted without a moment's delay. No injury can result from it, because a sufficient number of proper officers can and must be left, to recruit the corps to their full complement.

Nor will my fears respecting the state of our arms allow me to be silent on that head. Let the states be urged to send their men equipped with them, and every other necessary, if possible. I know not what supplies may be in store elsewhere, or in the power of Congress: but they must not depend upon their being furnished here with any, or but with very few:—no human prudence or precaution could secure but a small part of those belonging to the public, and in the hands of the soldiery, from being embezzled and carried off when their time of service expired; nor can the same abuses be restrained in the militia.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, Morristown, Feb. 9, 1777.

NO military operation of any consequence has occurred since I had the honor of writing to you last, except that on Sunday I received information that the enemy were advancing in a manner and in numbers so much greater than usual, that it looked like a prelude to an attack upon our posts, which were immediately put in the best preparation to receive them. It turned out to be only a stronger foraging party than usual. They were however opposed in so spirited a manner by our advanced parties, that they were checked, and retired in the afternoon towards Amboy, from whence they came. Their loss in the course of the day from the best accounts I can get, amounts to about one hundred in killed, wounded, prisoners, and deserters. Some people who were near the scene of action, and who have picked up accounts from those who have since been in Amboy, are sanguine enough to suppose that they lost five hundred altogether: but of this I have no conception.—Our loss was only two killed and ten wounded.

I was in hopes, that, by the time the militia who are now in service would be discharged, we should have a considerable number of the new levies in the field: but, though I have reports from all quarters of the great success of recruiting, I cannot get a man of them into service. General Johnson's militia all go the fifth of March (many are gone already), and general Lincoln's on the fifteenth. These two bodies form so considerable a part of our force, that, unless they are replaced

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I shall be left in a manner destitute : for I have no great hopes of seeing an equal number of continental troops by that time.

I have wrote to Pennsylvania, to endeavor to get a reinforcement of militia from thence ; and I am told the militia from the counties of Baltimore, Hartford, and Cecil, in Maryland, are on their march : but as I have it not from any authority, I know not when to expect them, or in what numbers. They are about passing a militia-law in this state, which may perhaps have some effect : but at present they are under no regulation at all.

I have in my late letters recommended several things to your consideration, particularly that of a promotion of general officers. The very well-being of the new army depends upon its being done speedily. Not only this, but we are now suffering for want of brigadiers. General Scuyler has wrote most pressing for the assistance of general officers ; and I have none to send him without injuring the service in this quarter.—The hospital plan too requires an answer, as nothing can be done in the nomination of the proper officers till I have your determination. There are several other matters of consequence before you, to which I am waiting your answers before I can proceed upon the respective points to which they refer.

Inclosed you have a letter from the widow of a brave officer, who was killed at Princeton. If any provision is made, I do not recollect what it is : if there is any, please to inform me : if there is not, I can venture to recommend her as a proper object, to make some reparation for her great loss.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

P. S. Mine of the twentieth mentioned that lord Percy had arrived with the troops from Rhode-Island : but I find he remains there. By some gentlemen just arrived from Boston, doctor Franklin's arrival in France is mentioned with certainty. A ship come to Salem brings the intelligence, the captain of which says the doctor had got in five days before his departure ; also that captain Weeks made two prizes in his passage, and they were condemned and sold at Bordeaux.

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SIR,

Head-Quarters, Morristown, March 1, 1777.

I WAS this evening honored with your favor of the twenty-third ultimo, accompanied by sundry proceedings of Congress. Those respecting general Lee, and which prescribe

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the treatment of lieutenant-colonel Campbell and the five Hessian field-officers, are the cause of this letter.

Though I sincerely commiserate the misfortunes of general Lee, and feel much for his present unhappy situation, yet, with all possible deference to the opinion of Congress, I fear that these resolutions would not have the desired effect,—are founded in impolicy,—and will, if adhered to, produce consequences of an extensive and melancholy nature. Retaliation is certainly just, and sometimes necessary, even where attended with the severest penalties: but, when the evils which may and must result from it exceed those intended to be redressed, prudence and policy require that it should be avoided.—Having premised thus much, I beg leave to examine the justice and expediency of it in the instances now before us.

From the best information I have been able to obtain, general Lee's usage has not been so disgraceful and dishonorable as to authorise the treatment decreed to those gentlemen, was it not prohibited by many other important considerations. His confinement, I believe, has been more rigorous than has been generally experienced by the rest of our officers, or those of the enemy who have been in our possession: but if the reports be true (received on that head), he has been provided with a decent apartment and with most things necessary to render him comfortable. This is not the case with one of the officers comprehended in the resolves, if his letter, of which a copy is transmitted, deserves your credit. Here retaliation seems to have been prematurely begun; or, to speak with more propriety, severities have been and are exercised towards colonel Campbell, not justified by any that general Lee has yet received.

In point of policy, under the present situation of our affairs, this doctrine cannot be supported. The balance of prisoners is greatly against us; and a general regard to the happiness of the whole should mark our conduct. Can we imagine that our enemies will not mete the same punishments, the same indignities, the same cruelties, to those belonging to us, in their possession, that we impose on theirs in our power? Why should we suppose them to possess more humanity than we have ourselves? or why should an ineffectual attempt to relieve the distresses of one brave unfortunate man involve many more in the same calamities?

However disagreeable the fact may be, the enemy at this time have in their power, and subject to their call, near three hundred officers belonging to the army of the United States. In this number, there are some of high rank; and most of them

are men of bravery and merit. The quota of theirs in our hands bears no proportion, being not more than fifty at most. Under these circumstances, we should certainly do no act to draw upon the gentlemen belonging to us, and who have already suffered a long captivity, greater punishments than they have and now experience. If we should, what will their feelings be, and those of their numerous and extensive connexions?—Suppose the treatment prescribed for the Hessians should be pursued, will it not establish what the enemy have been aiming to effect by every artifice and the grossest misrepresentations,—I mean, an opinion of our enmity towards them, and the cruel conduct they experience when they fall into our hands,—a prejudice which we on our part have heretofore thought it politic to suppress and to root out by every act of lenity and of kindness? It certainly will:—the Hessians would hear of the punishment with all the circumstances of heightened exaggeration,—would feel the injury, without investigating the cause, or reasoning upon the justice or necessity of it. The mischiefs, which may and must inevitably flow from the execution of the resolves, appear to be endless and innumerable.

On my own part, I have been much embarrassed on the subject of exchanges already. Applications are daily made by both friends and enemies, to complete them as far as circumstances of number and rank will apply. Some of the former have complained that a discrimination is about to be adopted, perhaps injurious to their reputation, and certainly depriving them of their right of exchange in due course, as established upon the principles of equality proposed last year, acceded to by both parties, and now subsisting. The latter charge me with a breach of faith, and call upon me to perform the agreement.

Many more objections might be subjoined, were they material:—I shall only observe, that the present state of our army (if it deserves that name) will not authorise the language of retaliation or the style of menace. This will be conceded by all who know that the whole of our force is weak and trifling, and composed of militia (a very few regular troops excepted) whose service is on the eve of expiring.

There are several other matters which might be mentioned upon this subject, would time and opportunity permit: but, as they will not, I beg leave to refer you to colonel Walker, who will deliver this, and give satisfaction to any enquiries that may be deemed necessary. Persuading myself that Congress will indulge the liberty I have taken upon this occasion, I have only to

to wish for the result of their deliberations after they have reconsidered the resolves, and to assure them that—I have the honor to be, &c. G. W.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, Morrisstown, March 6, 1777.

I do myself the honor to transmit you the inclosed copy of a letter from general Lee, received by a flag on Tuesday last. You will perceive from thence his wishes and expectations of seeing some members of Congress in consequence of his letter upon that subject. None of the passports which he mentions were sent out, though the letter came by general Howe's permission as the others did. I should be happy to relieve his anxiety as far as I could, by sending in major Morris: but this I cannot do till a safe conduct is granted.

The more I consider the resolves respecting lieutenant colonel Campbell and the Hessian officers, the more convinced I am of their impolicy. The proposition made by Congress for the exchange of prisoners, and which by their direction was transmitted to general Howe, was founded on principles of equality in number and in rank. From hence no demand, as a matter of right, can be made of general Lee's releasement for any officer or number of officers of inferior rank: whatever is or might be done in such instance, would be of favor and indulgence. The only cartel that now subsists is the one I have mentioned. This, so far as it goes, is a beneficial one: it recognises the rank of our officers, and insures their discharge from captivity whenever we are possessed of a like number belonging to them, and of the same rank. If on our part it should be violated,—if it is not observed,—surely it will and must cease to be obligatory on general Howe. What consequences may then ensue, I leave to your conjecture.

If it be objected that the above observations, and what I said in my former letter, prove that no treatment received by our officers should be retaliated on theirs,—my answer is, that the proportion of officers in their hands is at least six to one in ours. This consideration, supposing we had a right to demand general Lee's liberty, would be of great weight, and sufficient to prevent, in my opinion, the execution of the resolves.—I have the honor to be, in haste, your most obedient servant,
G. W.

Head-

Sir, *Head-Quarters, Morristown, March 14, 1777.*

I WAS honored several days ago with your letter of the twenty-fifth ultimo, with its inclosures, the receipt of which was omitted to be acknowledged in my last.

Could I accomplish the important objects so eagerly wished by Congress,—“confining the enemy within their present quarters,—preventing their getting supplies from the country, and totally subduing them before they are reinforced,”—I should be happy indeed. But what prospect or hope can there be of my effecting so desirable a work at this time? The inclosed return, to which I solicit the most serious attention of Congress, comprehends the whole force I have in Jersey. It is but a handful, and bears no proportion, on the scale of numbers, to that of the enemy. Added to this, the major part is made up of militia. The most sanguine in speculation cannot deem it more than adequate to the least valuable purposes of war.

The reinforcements mentioned to be drawn from general Heath were merely ideal,—nearly the whole of the eastern troops which were with him being here before. They were only engaged till to-day: and to-day they leave the camp. Their service has been of pretty long continuance, and almost the whole of the winter months. What prospect there may be of immediate succours from other quarters, I know not: but from the militia of this state I cannot expect to derive much more aid. Those who are well effected have been so frequently called from their home, that they are tired out, and almost profess an abhorrence of the service: nor have I heard as yet that any continental troops are on the way. I have wrote to the brigadiers-general in most of the states upon the subject, and also to the colonels, urging them by every motive to exert themselves in filling the regiments and to forward them on.

I confess, sir, I feel the most painful anxiety when I reflect on our situation and that of the enemy. Unless the levies arrive soon, we must, before it be long, experience some interesting and melancholy event. I believe the enemy have fixed their object, and the execution will surely be attempted as soon as the roads are passable. The unprepared state in which we are, favors all their designs; and it is much to be wished that they may not succeed to their warmest expectations.

On recurring to the late promotions of brigadiers, I find the number appointed to be short of what I took the liberty to recommend, and not competent to the exigencies of the service supposing the whole in office before, and those lately created,
consent

consent to act, which I have reason to believe will not be the case. I shall only beg leave to refer you to my former letters upon this subject, and to assure you that many disadvantages will result from not having a sufficient number of officers of this rank. We have always been deficient in this instance; and certain I am that the service is greatly injured by it. The proportion I mentioned was full small, and, in my opinion, should not be dispensed with.

I would also take the liberty of mentioning again (having received no answer upon the subject) that settling the hospital plan and establishment becomes more and more necessary. It is an object of infinite importance; and the difficulties of doing it on a proper foundation will be great, if not almost insurmountable, should it be deferred till the campaign opens, and the enemy begin their operations. The benefits of the institution will soon be known:—the want was severely felt in the course of the last year.

There is one thing more which claims, in my opinion, the earliest attention of Congress,—I mean the pay of the regimental surgeons, and that of the mates. These appointments are so essential, that they cannot be done without. The pay, in the first instance, is so low, so inadequate to the services which should be performed, that no man sustaining the character of a gentleman, and who has the least medical abilities or skill in the profession, can think of accepting it: that in the latter is so paltry and trifling, that none, of the least generosity of sentiment or pretensions to merit, can consent to act for it. In a word, these are inconveniencies of an interesting nature:—they amount to an exclusion of persons who could discharge the duties of those offices; and, if not redressed, there is not the smallest probability that any can be prevailed on to enter them again.

There are several matters also which I referred to Congress some time since, and upon which I have not received the result of their deliberations.—one enquiry, about the state of arms and ammunition, I am peculiarly anxious to be satisfied in.

From the inconveniences and injuries to the service of late for want of money, I am induced to request that the strictest regard should be had to furnishing the paymaster with constant and sufficient supplies. On Sunday he received five hundred thousand dollars, half of which is already expended, and the balance in a day or two will be entirely swept away, without discharging the several claims. By his report, the commissary here requires an immediate draught for a hundred thousand;
and

and the militia returning and about to leave camp, a hundred and twenty thousand more. The expense incurred by calling on them so frequently is almost incredible. Besides these, there are several arrears due to the old troops, and to most of the general and staff officers.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

I fully intended to transmit you a general return, but am not able to make it out with precision. However, from the most accurate estimate that I can form, the whole of our numbers in Jersey, fit for duty at this time, is under three thousand. These (nine hundred and eighty-one excepted) are militia, and stand engaged only till the last of this month. The troops under inoculation, including their attendants, amount to about one thousand.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, Morristown, March 18, 1777.

THE difficulty if not impossibility of giving Congress a just idea of our situation (and of several other important matters requiring their earliest attention) by letter, has induced me to prevail on major-general Greene to wait upon them for that purpose. This gentleman is so much in my confidence, so intimately acquainted with my ideas,—with our strength and our weaknesses,—with every thing respecting the army,—that I have thought it necessary to particularise or prescribe any certain line of duty or inquiries for him. I shall only say, from the rank he holds as an able and good officer in the estimation of all who knew him, he deserves the greatest respect; and much regard is due to his opinions in the line of his profession. He has upon his mind such matters as appear to me most material to be immediately considered of; and many more will probably arise during the intercourse you may think proper to honor him with;—on all which I wish to have the sense of Congress, and the result of such a deliberation as may be formed thereupon.

I have enclosed an extract of a letter received yesterday from governor Trumbull, with a copy of one intercepted, going from the late governor Wentworth to his sister. The information contained in the letter, if true, is important and interesting: how far it is to be relied on, I cannot determine: but there can be no doubt of the British court's straining every nerve and interest at home and abroad, to bend us to their * * * yoke.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.
Sir,

SIR,

Morristown, March 21, 1777.

I was last night honored with your letter of the seventeenth instant, covering sundry, resolutions of Congress which shall have my attention.

Having charged major-general Greene, who will probably be in Philadelphia to-day, with such matters as I wished to refer to the consideration of Congress, I have nothing to trouble them with at this time, or material to inform them of.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, Morristown, March 23, 1777.

COLONEL Palfrey, having expressed a desire to settle the accounts of his office to this time, has obtained my permission to repair to Philadelphia, and now waits on Congress with his books and vouchers, hoping that a committee will be appointed to examine and adjust the same.

The disadvantages which have arisen to the service, and which have been severely felt, for want of constant supplies in the military chest, are almost incredible, and are not to be described but with great difficulty to those who are not immediately in the army, and privy to the frequent and importunate applications that are made. To prevent inconveniencies of the like nature in future, I have thought it proper that an estimate of the monthly advances should be formed and laid before Congress. This colonel Palfrey will do; and, though it cannot be effected with a degree of scrupulous exactness and precision, yet from his intimate knowledge of the incidental charges and expenses in the common course of things, the calculation, I apprehend, will be attended with many benefits. It will shew Congress the necessary provisions of money to be made for ordinary contingencies, and enable them to form a rule for their government in the instance of supplies for the army.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Morristown, March 26, 1777.

YESTERDAY a letter, of which the inclosed is a copy, came to my hands. The account is confirmed by a countryman who is since come in: but nothing distinct has yet been received.

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The aid required of me in colonel Hay's letter cannot be given: I have no men to oppose the enemy's designs in any one quarter, although called upon from every quarter. All that was possible for me to do towards collecting a force at Peekskill, I had attempted before:—I had in peremptory terms called upon the officers of Rhode-Island and Connecticut to forward on their recruits under proper officers as fast as possible to that place: I had directed such of the New-York regiments as had been ordered to Ticonderoga, to repair thither: I had requested eight of the Massachusetts regiments to be marched to that post: and, lest these should not arrive in time, I urged governor Trumbull, in a letter of the sixth instant, to send two thousand of his militia to the same place. But sorry I am to observe, the militia have got tired; and the colonels of the continental regiments have been greatly deceived themselves,—have greatly deceived me,—or the most unheard-of desertions * * * have prevailed * * *: for regiments, reported two or three months ago to be half completed, are, upon the colonels being called upon in positive terms for a just state of them, found to contain less than one hundred men; and this not the case of a single regiment only, but of many. In Connecticut alone, by a letter from general Parsons, of the sixth instant, four regiments are mentioned as not having more than eighty rank and file, each.

These, sir, are melancholy truths: but facts they are, and necessary to be known to Congress, however prudent it may be to conceal them from the observation of others.

To superintend the business of recruiting,—to see that the officers were diligent,—to prevent impositions if possible,—to appoint fit places of rendezvous,—to see that the recruits were actually brought to those places, and there equipped and trained for the field,—were among the great objects which early and repeatedly induced me to press the appointment of general officers: but unfortunately the delay of appointing, being followed by the resignation of some officers and non-acceptance of others, will involve the army in a mere chaos of confusion at a time when the utmost order and regularity should prevail, and when all our arrangements ought to be completely established. The medical department will, it is much to be feared, be in the same situation:—not an officer yet appointed to it.

For want of proper and coercive powers,—from disaffection and other causes,—the militia of this state are not to be depended upon. They are drawn out with difficulty, and at a most enormous expense, as their accounts will shew: they come, you
can

can scarce tell how ; they go, you hardly know when. In the same predicament are those of Pennsylvania.

Numbers from this state have joined the enemy ; and many more are disposed to do so, as the letter from Mr. Hoff (a copy of which is inclosed, corresponding with several others of the same tenor) sufficiently evinces.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

P. S. Small as our present force is, it will be reduced in a few days by the going off of the Jersey three-months men, the Cecil-county militia, and the Virginia volunteers, all of whom claim discharges the first of next month. I have sent an officer express towards Peekskill to inquire into the circumstances and consequence of the enemy's descent upon that place,—not being able to account for general M'Dougal's (who commands there) and general Clinton's (who is at the forts in the Highlands) their silence upon this occasion.

SIR,

Morristown, March 29, 1777.

I LAST night had the honor to receive your letter of the twenty-sixth instant, accompanied by sundry resolves of Congress, and some other papers.

The arrival of the arms, locks, and flints, you have been pleased to mention, is a most fortunate and happy event. I join you most sincerely in congratulations upon the occasion.

I have not yet obtained a certain account of the expedition against and destruction of Peekskill. Information of those events has not been yet transmitted by generals M'Dougal or Clinton, or the convention of the state. There is no doubt but that the town is destroyed, and, with it, some stores:—neither the quality nor amount of them is known. It is said that it was done in part by our own people when they found that they could not prevent them falling into the enemy's hands.—The ships and troops have gone down the river again.

Mr. Kirkland, the Oneida missionary, arrived here this week with a chief warrior and five other Indians of that nation. They had been to Boston, and came from thence to this place to inquire into the true state of matters, that they might report them to a grand council to be shortly held. They said things were so falsely and variously represented by our enemies through their agents, that they did not know what to depend on. I invited them to go to Philadelphia : but they declined it, declaring they were well satisfied with what they had seen, and that

they were authorized to tell their nation, all they had heard from the enemy was false. Being told that France was assisting us, and about to join in the war, they seemed highly pleased; and Mr. Kirkland said he was persuaded it would have a considerable effect on the minds of several of the nations, and secure to us their neutrality, if not a declaration and commencement of hostilities in our favor. I shewed them every civility in my power, and every thing that I thought material to excite in them an idea of our strength and independence. After staying two days, they set off for their nation expressing their desire of the most speedy return to the council, and professing the most friendly sentiments towards us.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Morrisstown, March 29, 1777.

SINCE I had the honor of addressing you this morning by the return express the eastern post arrived. The intelligence he brought is agreeable and interesting, as you will perceive by the inclosed letter from Mr. Hazard, which I do myself the pleasure of transmitting. I am happy to say the arrival of the ship at Portsmouth and the capture of the two prizes is confirmed by other letters from gentlemen of note in and about Boston. Upon these events I give you my most hearty congratulations. Some of the letters add that a French general, colonel, and major, came passengers in the ship, who are highly recommended by doctor Franklin.

The affair of Peekskill has not been transmitted me with certainty: but I am informed, the relation of it in Loudon's paper which I have inclosed, is nearly as it happened.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, Morrisstown, March 31, 1777.

CAPTAIN Deshields, of Mr. Buchanan's ship from Baltimore, who was taken by the enemy and carried into York, made his escape from thence on saturday evening. He informs that three thousand troops British and Hessian, embarked about ten days ago from the city and Staten-Island, on board transports which were lying at the latter when he came away. He adds that the enemy have built and are building a number of light flat bottomed boats, about seventy of which are finished.

Captain

Captain Deshields says it seemed to be the general opinion and conversation that this embarkation was for Chesapeak-bay, with a view of making a descent on the Eastern-Shore, or that the troops were to proceed to the Head of Elk, taking Annapolis and Baltimore in their way. There were some who thought it probable they mean to go up the North-river and attempt the Highland fortifications.—I have written to generals M'Dougal and Clinton, desiring them to make the best preparation that circumstances will admit of, for their reception. in case the latter should be their object.

Captain Deshields being in company with the captain of the packet, but unknown to him, heard him say that a war with France was much expected when he left England, which was about the beginning of February.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, Morristown, April 2, 1777.

SINCE I had the honor of writing to you last, I have received the inclosed from general M'Dougal, which contains a full account of the late affair at Peekskill. Every prudential step appears to have been taken by the general, and as good a disposition made as his small number of men would admit of.

I have heard nothing further respecting the embarkation of troops which I mentioned in my last.—I am in hopes the Connecticut militia will arrive at Peekskill before another expedition is made up the North-river. I have wrote to hasten them as much as possible, lest such another design should be really in agitation.—In my opinion, Delaware bay is their object, and Chesapeak only thrown out by way of blind: their late attempt to procure Delaware pilots seems to confirm it.

I observe by your late promotions that a foreign gentleman is appointed to the command of the German batallion. I could wish that he was ordered to join immediately, as that regiment much wants an officer of experience at the head of it.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

P. S. I have ordered the deputy quarter-master-general to establish proper relays of expresses between this and Philadelphia, that intelligence may be occasionally conveyed in the most expeditious manner. If there should be any appearance of a fleet in Delaware-bay, it will be known in a very few hours in Philadelphia, by hoisting the signals; and I beg I may have

have the earliest notice of it.—The quarter-master will inform you who his rider in Philadelphia is, that you may know where to apply.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, Morristown, April 9, 1777.

I AM honored with yours of the fourth, inclosing sundry resolves of Congress from the twenty-ninth of March to the fifth instant.—I am extremely glad to see the resolve for the immediate removal of military stores from Baltimore and Annapolis: for, although I do not imagine that the enemy intend an expedition of any great consequence in Chesapeak-bay yet while the stores lay at the above-mentioned places, they were always subject to be destroyed by a sudden attack of a ship of war with a few land forces.

The regulations for the paymaster-general's department are very salutary, and, if carried strictly into execution, will make a vast saving to the public. It may be easily done when the army is put upon a regular footing: but, while we are obliged to make use of militia, we must submit to all the irregularities that naturally attend them, and must not therefore expect to have the rule as scrupulously complied with by them as could be wished. * * *

The muster-master-general complained that the duty required of him was more than he could perform: but by the late resolves there is an ample allowance for deputies; and therefore no further excuse can be made upon that head.

I most ardently wish to see the hospital established. I am afraid too much time has been lost in the consideration of the plan: but the gentlemen who shall be appointed to the superintendence must endeavor to make up for lost time by their diligence.

By the latest accounts from Brunswic, it looks as if the enemy were projecting an embarkation. They have been stripping the buildings of boards, and cutting small timber, and transporting them from Brunswic to Amboy. It is imagined this is to build births in their transports.—I shall keep a constant look-out upon the motions of the vessels, and shall endeavor to obtain every intelligence by sending people into their quarters.—I think Delaware-bay must be their destination if they move by water.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.
Sir,

SIR,

Morrisstown, April 10, 1777.

I WAS just now honored with your letter of the ninth instant, covering sundry resolutions of Congress. Those for regulating the hospital and medical department, I trust, will prove of the most salutary consequences. It is only to be regretted that this necessary and liberal institution had not been gone into and completed at an earlier period.

The honors Congress have decreed to the memory of generals Warren and Mercer, afford me the highest pleasure; their character and merit had a just claim to every mark of respect; and I heartily wish that every officer of the United States, emulating their virtues, may by their actions secure to themselves the same right to the grateful tributes of their country.

Since writing to you yesterday I have received further intelligence of the enemy's preparations in York, indicating a movement before long. It is contained in the inclosed letter, No. 1, and corroborates the opinion I have long entertained that they would make a push against Philadelphia. The tory regiments mentioned, we are told, are at Hackinsac, and are about five hundred strong, exclusive of a company of Highlanders which is with them.

The inclosed letter from le chevalier count De Vrecount came to hand this morning,—which I have thought proper to transmit to Congress, that they may consider his case, and adopt such measures respecting him as his character and testimonials deserve. I never heard of him before: but if he is a skilful engineer, he will be extremely useful, and should be employed, though he may not understand our language. At this time we have not one with the army, nor one to join it, of the least reputation or pretensions to skill. If this gentleman came in consequence of an agreement with doctor Franklin, and brought credentials from him, I should suppose him to be acquainted with what he was recommended for,

The cartel, proposed to be settled, and so long in agitation, is not accomplished yet: the last meeting on that business was the second instant, when nothing was done; nor is a further interview appointed respecting it. I have transmitted a copy of lord Cornwallis's letter which came out the next day, with that of the paper alluded to by him, which Mr. Harrison refused to receive from colonel Walcot, and of my answer to the latter in a letter to general Howe. The objections or articles mentioned by colonel Walcot were those general Greene had with him, and which he left when he came from Philadelphia:

phia: the original I have by me. Those points were insisted on again, and rejected, and a tender made of the paper by colonel Walcot, which he brought with him prepared.

I have appointed John Wilkins, John Steel, Mathew Irvin, and Samuel Kersey, esquires, captains of companies to be raised by them, in consequence of the recommendation of general Armstrong. As the interest of those gentlemen lies in Pennsylvania chiefly, and it would be drawing money from the paymaster here to carry to Philadelphia (supposing there was a supply in the chest, which is not the case), I shall be obliged by Congress's ordering six hundred dollars to be advanced to each of them on account of the recruiting service; the first of whom I imagine is in Philadelphia. If this requisition can be complied with, he, I presume, will give notice to the rest; or, if general Armstrong is informed of it, he will do it.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, Morristown, April 12, 1777.

HAVING seen a letter from doctor Franklin, and many other credentials in favor of monsieur le chevalier Du Pluffis, he appears to me to be a person worthy of the notice and encouragement of Congress. He has served in the French artillery; and both his inclination and qualifications make it proper he should have an appointment in ours. There are some vacancies in the artillery for captains, one of which may be offered him as a beginning. The superior ranks are all completed.

I am, sir, your most humble servant,

G. W.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, Morristown, April 12, 1777.

I AM honored with yours of the tenth, accompanied with one from the committee of Congress to whom I have wrote very fully upon the subject of the resolve for forming an army upon the west side of Delaware, and to which I refer you. —I wish I could see any prospect of an army, fit to make proper opposition, formed any where. You will perhaps be surprised at this after the public reports of the great success of recruiting in all the states; but, to convince you that these are but bare reports, I will give you the best information I have been able to collect from actual returns and other accounts.

New-

New-Hampshire.—No returns; but a letter from general Heath says they are tolerably forward.—All their regiments go to the northward.

Massachusetts.—About four hundred men raised to a regiment; many of these yet to undergo inoculation. Seven of their regiments go to the northward, and eight are to come to Peekskill for the present.

Rhode-Island.—Only three hundred and sixty men enlisted in both regiments the first of April. Two hundred of these are yet to be inoculated.—General Varnum writes me that he despairs of filling up the regiments.

Connecticut.—By a return from general Parsons, of the fourth of April, about eighteen hundred men were recruited through the whole state,—they, much dispersed;—many to have the small-pox; and recruiting at a stand.

New-York.—About two hundred men to a regiment: and, from the peculiar situation of that province, it will be almost impossible for them to fill up their regiments though they exert themselves very much.

New-Jersey.—Between two and three hundred to a regiment. They also lie under many difficulties on account of the disaffection of their state: but their officers are active and diligent.

Pennsylvania.—Most of her regiments are very backward,—those most so, who have been longest recruiting.

Delaware state.—No return of their regiment.

Maryland.—I have only the return of one regiment, which consists of two hundred men: but I do not believe the others are in more forwardness. The disputes about the rank of officers have prevailed so much, that the recruiting service has been in a manner neglected.

Virginia.—The nine old regiments will not exceed eighteen hundred effective men: and governor Henry, in a letter which I received yesterday, informs me that he did not think that more than four of the six new ones would be filled. He proposes the expediency of raising volunteer companies to serve seven or eight months, to make up the deficiency: but this I shall object to on many accounts, particularly that it would be introducing a body of men who would look upon themselves at liberty to do what they pleased, and, the moment their time expired would leave us, though at the most critical juncture.

If the men that are raised, few as they are, could be got into the field, it would be a matter of some consolation: but every method that I have been able to devise has proved ineffectual,

tual. If I send an officer to collect the sick and scattered of his regiment, it is ten to one but he neglects his duty, goes home on pleasure or business, and the next that I hear of him is that he has resigned:—furloughs are not more attended to than if there was no limitation of time:—and in short, sir, there is such a total depression of that military ardor which I hoped would have inspired every officer when he found his pay genteelly augmented and the army put upon a respectable footing, that it seems to me as if all public spirit was sunk.

I shall as soon as possible transmit to the board of war a list of the appointments I have made in consequence of the powers vested in me.

If the appointments in the hospital are not filled up before the receipt of this, I would take the liberty of mentioning a gentleman whom I think highly deserving of notice, not only on account of his abilities, but for the very great assistance which he has afforded in the course of this winter, merely in the nature of a volunteer. The gentleman is doctor John Cochran, well known to all the faculty, and particularly to doctor Shippen, who, I suppose, has mentioned him among the candidates. The place for which the doctor is well fitted, and which will be most agreeable to him, is surgeon general to the middle department. In this line he served all the last war in the British service, and has distinguished himself this winter, particularly in his attention to the small-pox patients and the wounded, who, but for him and doctor Bond, must have suffered much, if not been totally neglected, as there were no other medical gentlemen to be found.—If the appointment of surgeon-general is filled up, that of deputy-director of the middle department would be acceptable.

I have been thus full in my recommendation because doctor Cochran in my manner had my promise of one of the capital appointments in the hospital, upon a presumption that I should have had some hand in the nomination by the resolution of Congress empowering me to fill all commissions under the rank of brigadiers-general.

Apr. 13.—I have this moment received a line from general Lincoln, informing me that the enemy attempted to surprise him early this morning at his post at Roundbrook; but he made good his retreat to the pass of the mountains just in his rear, with trifling loss.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

Head.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, Morrisstown, April. 15, 1777.

THE inclosed from monsieur le chevalier De Dreudhomme de Borre, with the papers annexed to it, were received this day by the eastern mail. It appears that by an agreement with Mr. Deane he is to have the rank and pay of a brigadier-general in our service. I imagine by this that he is a man of real merit. If you think proper to confirm Mr. Deane's appointment be pleased to inform me of it and return the letter, that I may give a suitable answer. If, as I imagine, he does not understand English, it will be some time before he can be of any use at the head of a brigade.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, Morrisstown, April 18, 1777.

I HAVE nothing of importance to transmit Congress, no event in the military line having happened since my last, except the surprising a small picquet guard of the enemy on monday night at Bonemtown, and bringing off thirteen prisoners by one of our parties. An enterprize of a similar nature was formed against that at Amboy, in which the party sent to effect it did not succeed so well, though the most advanced of them seized and secured three of their out-centuries without giving an alarm.

By a letter from general M'Dougal, of yesterday, I am informed that he had received accounts of thirty-six sail of transports having left Newport on friday last, with troops on board. Other reports he had were that a number of ships were coming up the sound, so that we may reasonably conclude general Howe is drawing his forces from the eastward. General Arnold, in a letter of the sixth, mentioned, that, from the preparation of transports, and other circumstances, he thought it probable an embarkation was about to take place.

There are grounds to suspect from information received, that some unfair practices have been and are meant to be used in certain exports from Philadelphia. It is said that a vessel navigated by Frenchmen loaded there, belong to * * * of New-York, which carried her cargo to general Howe; also that * * * and * * * of Monmouth-county intend to load one or more for the same purpose, under the idea of sending them to foreign markets. I have written to the board of war for Pennsylvania upon the subject, and doubt not but these hints will be

properly improved, and such frauds guarded against as well as circumstances will admit.

I have inclosed a copy of an advertisement published in *Gaine's* paper of the fourteenth, which shews that no artifices are left untried by the enemy to injure us. Before the appearance of this unparralleled piece, I had heard that a person was gone from York to Rhode-Island with a quantity of counterfeit money.

There is one thing which I beg leave to mention to Congress, and which I think highly deserving their attention, that is, that supplies of hard money, or bills of exchange to procure it, should, if possible be sent our prisoners in the hands of the enemy, at least to the officers, to relieve their wants. By letters which I have received from them of late, I find they are in great distress, and such as ought to be removed, if it can be done.—No inconvenience will result to the public from such supplies, if they can be furnished, as proper stoppages and deductions can be made from their pay.

April 19.—I was honored with your letter of the sixteenth between twelve and one o'clock yesterday, accompanied by sundry resolutions. I hope the measures Congress have adopted will produce the salutary consequences they had in view: but I fear that the states, unless they are delicate in exercising the powers they are invested with for filling vacancies in instances of removal from office, and pay strict attention to a proper line of succession where there are no capital objections, will renew much of that confusion and disorder we have been endeavoring to extricate ourselves from. Nor will this be of small difficulty if they displace many officers: for, supposing them to have kept the most accurate lists of their original appointments, changes have taken place in several instances from various causes unknown to them, and of which they cannot be apprised.

I can assure Congress the appellation given to the regiments officered by me was without my consent or privity. As soon as I heard it, I wrote to several of the officers in terms of severe reprehension, and expressly charged them to suppress the distinction, adding that all the battalions were on the same footing, and all under the general name of Continental.

An attack upon the king's troops of Rhode-Island was certainly a desirable event, could it have been conducted with success, or upon equal terms. It being an object of great moment, and involving in its issue many important consequences, I am led to believe the practicability of it has had much consideration, and the measure was found to be unadvisable under the circum-

circumstances of the troops collected for the purpose. If the enemy have not evacuated the Island, I suppose the matter will be further weighed.

I do not find in the medical arrangement any mention of regimental surgeons' mates, or provision made for their payment. Whether Congress mean to dispense with such officers or not, I cannot tell: I have heard that they do: but they appear to me to be absolutely necessary. We are often obliged to divide regiments and send a part to a distant post: when this is the case, it is essential that there should be some person with them to take charge of the sick or wounded, if such there should be.—I have only mentioned this of many reasons that might be urged to shew the expediency of such appointments.

Notwithstanding the many circumstances inducing a belief that Philadelphia will be the first object of the enemy's attention,—yet, as the stratagems of war are various, and they may be easily changed, especially when they have the entire command of the water,—I cannot but consider the detention of the troops at Philadelphia, farther than mentioned in my letter in answer to that from the board of war, as expedient, and subject to great inconvenience and injury. In the present divided, separated state of the army, we are weak at all points, and not able to make the least opposition promising success. Supposing they were collected here, they would be ready to act as necessity and circumstances might require. If the enemy pushed for Philadelphia, we should have notice of it, and could hang upon their flank and rear: nor is it likely they would undertake such an expedition without attempting the destruction or dispersion of the army first. If they embarked and should go to sea, we should have information of it, and could be there in time. On the other hand, should all they have done prove a feint, and they should turn their views to the North-river, we should be in a much better situation to counteract their designs, and to check the progress of their arms in that quarter. Added to this, several of the regiments, especially those which came first from Virginia and Pennsylvania, are so broken that it is impossible to do any thing with the parts that are here; and that spirit which is always derived from a corps being full, or as much so as circumstances of number will admit of, is entirely done away.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

Mor.

SIR,

Morrisstown, April 21, 1777.

I WAS this morning honored with your favor of the twentieth, inclosing sundry proceedings of Congress.—The removal of provisions, &c. from the communication between Brunswick and Trenton has been pretty well effected already. It was an object early attended to, and what I recommended to the assembly of this state as deserving their interposition and aid: but finding that it had not their immediate consideration, and that they seemed to decline interfering in the matter, I directed the quarter-master and commissaries to purchase their first supplies of those necessaries from such places as appeared to be most exposed to the enemy's incursions and through which it is most probable they will take their route towards the Delaware, in case an enterprise that way should be in contemplation. I have transmitted copies of the resolve upon this subject to general Putnam and colonel Forman (the latter of whom is in Monmouth-county), with orders to execute the same agreeable to the directions therein prescribed, where it may be necessary on the road leading from South-Amboy across the country.

I have nothing of importance to communicate to Congress. The advices they will receive to-day, which passed through this town yesterday, will tell them that the enemy remained at Rhode-Island on the fifteenth instant, notwithstanding the accounts we had received of their embarkation before.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, Morrisstown, April 23, 1777.

I HAVE the honor to transmit you the inclosed pieces of intelligence which I received this day from general Stephens, who by my desire employed persons to go into New-York and Brunswick. I do not put entire confidence in the whole: but the principal reason of sending the intelligence forward is, that proper measures may be fallen upon to find out and apprehend Thomas * * * mentioned in general Stephens letter of this date.

If the enemy should move, I have taken steps to make as good an opposition as my small force is capable of.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

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OFFICIAL LETTERS.

51

SIR,

Morrisstown, April 26, 1777.

I WAS last night honored with your letter of the twenty-fifth, with sundry resolves of Congress. Such of them as are necessary for my government and conduct I shall strictly attend to.

The money and bill for our prisoners had better be transmitted to Elias Boudinot, esquire, to whom I shall give directions to adopt ways and means for sending the same, and for a proper appropriation and distribution of the money amongst them. Bills, I think will be most eligible, provided they are duly paid. As to procuring clothes in New-York, I have reason to believe that it will not be allowed, and that the prisoners will obtain no supplies but what we send them.

I heard of Mr. Franklin's practices some time ago, and advised governor Trumbull of the same, that his conduct might be properly attended to. It is very unhappy for us, that, through the intrigues of such men, the enemy have found means to raise a spirit of disaffection but too generally in many of the states. In this, I have strong assurances that it has arisen to a great height; and I shall not be disappointed if a large number of the inhabitants in some of the counties should openly appear in arms as soon as the enemy begin their operations. I have taken every measure in my power to suppress it; but nevertheless several from Suffex and Bergen have joined their army, and the spirit becomes more and more daring every day.

You will be pleased to direct general Mifflin to remain in Philadelphia as long as Congress shall think his presence there essential.

I have inclosed a copy of general Howe's letter which I received last night in answer to mine of the ninth instant.

Nothing of an interesting nature has occurred since my last: which leaves me only to add, that I have the honor to be, with sentiments of the greatest respect, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Morrisstown, April 28, 1777.

I LAST night received the favor of your letter of the twenty-sixth, with the resolves to which it alludes.

The views of Congress, in sending general officers to the eastward to hasten on the troops, have been long anticipated: general Poor is in New-Hampshire for the purpose,—general Heath in Massachusetts-Bay, with the brigadiers, Nixon Glover

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ver and Patterfon,—general Varnum in Rhode-Island, and general Parsons in Connecticut. Generals Spencer and Arnold too have been desired to attend to the business. To these gentlemen I have wrote repeatedly in the most pressing terms upon the subject, and I have no reason to doubt but every exertion on their part has been employed to promote the end. The delay of those who have enlisted has arisen from the late period when they engaged, and from their being inoculated since, which could not be dispensed with, without subjecting them to the calamities and ravage of the small-pox in the natural way.

At three o'clock this morning I received a letter from general M'Dougal inclosing three from colonel Huntington, copies of the whole of which I have transmitted. By these, you will perceive the impresson which a part of general Howe's army has made into Connecticut, and the prospect they had of destroying such of our stores as were deposited in Danbury, which unfortunately were but too large and considerable, if the event has taken place. A circumstance, perhaps more to be regretted, is that the enemy marched through a strong and rough country, and were near that place, without the smallest opposition. I have no other information upon the subject than what these papers contain: but we have little ground to expect that they have not accomplished their purpose. Further intelligence will be probably received to-day or to-morrow, when I shall be happy to hear that they have paid for their enterprise. Of this, I confess however, I am not very sanguine in my expectations.

This post had been considered as a proper depository for stores, by gentlemen acquainted with it; and its security not thought questionable whilst troops were passing through it. I had also directed that as many of the draughts in Connecticut as the place was capable of accommodating, should be collected there and inoculated, to answer the purpose of a guard, hoping, by the time of their recovery, that the situation of the army would be such as to admit a strong one to be stationed there, and continued; but, unhappily for us, such languor and supineness prevails every where, that we seem unable to effect any point we wish, though never so important and interesting. So early as the sixth of March, I wrote to governor Trumbull, earnestly requesting two thousand militia to be sent to general M'Dougal to be employed at Peekskill and on the communication in West-Chester county for six weeks. With this requisition he most readily complied so far as his orders were necessary,

fary, and (I am certain) his influence would extend. This I have repeated, and this supply he has exerted himself to furnish: yet so ineffectual have his endeavors been, that not more than eight hundred had come out, by general M'Dougal's return on the seventeenth instant; nor did he expect more, from the accounts he had. In a word, sir, no expedient or pains have been un-attempted by me to bring on troops, and to keep our affairs on a favorable footing.

I would again mention the case of our prisoners with the enemy, and pray that the secret committee would send to Mr. Boudinot supplies of money for them as early as possible. They are in great distress, and many officers have lately escaped, contrary to the tenor of their parole; some of whom are now here, urging that necessity compelled them to the measure.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

Morristown, April 30, 1777, half after 8 o'clock P. M.

SIR,

I HAVE been waiting with much anxiety to hear the result of the expedition against Danbury, which I never was informed of till this minute. The inclosed copy of a letter from general M'Dougal, and of several others which he transmitted, will give Congress all the intelligence I have upon the subject. I have only to add and to lament that this enterprise has been attended with but too much success on the part of the enemy.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Morristown, May 3, 1777.

I WAS yesterday honored with your letter of the twenty-ninth ultimo, inclosing sundry resolves.—Agreeable to the directions of Congress, I have written to the states of New-Hampshire and Massachusetts, and urged them to complete and forward their troops destined for Ticonderoga, with all possible expedition. The brigadiers gone there for the present are Fermoy, Poor, Patterson, and Learned. Nixon and Glover were also intended for that post under my first plan, which was, that all the regiments to be raised in those states by the resolve in September, should compose that army. But having by the advice of my officers directed the route of eight regiments from the

the latter to Peekskill, to wait till the designs of general Howe were unfolded, these two officers were to follow them.—I did not particularise the brigadiers who were to go first, or the regiments; but left the matter to major-general Heath, who was instructed in general terms to pursue such measures as seemed most likely to promote the service.

The colonels appointed to the New-Hampshire regiments I never knew. Those ordered to Ticonderoga from Massachusetts by general Heath, and who I presume have marched, were Bailey, Wesson, Jackson, Marshall, Brewer, Bradford, and Francis. What proportions of their regiments have marched, I cannot ascertain: but I am persuaded they were detached as fast as they were raised, and circumstances would admit. Francis's, the first of April, was returned five hundred strong; and, by a letter from colonel Marshall about the fifteenth of last month, he expected to march in a day or two with the last division of his regiment that was ready, which would make about four hundred, including those who had gone. The remainder (about sixty) were to follow with the proper officers as soon as they were fit,—the having been inoculated.

I have written to generals M'Dougal and Clinton to have the provision removed from Derby, &c. and directed that they should point out proper places for its reception in Ulster; also that small works and guards of militia will be essential for its protection. * * *

The damage we sustained at Danbury, nor the enemy's loss, have not been transmitted with any accuracy: but, from the latest accounts from thence, the former was not so great, and and the latter more considerable, than was apprehended at first.

I congratulate Congress upon the fortunate arrival of the Amphitrite with military and ordnance stores:—it is an important event. That of the French ship at Boston, and of the sloop from Martinique, added to the capture of the two provision ships, are to be regarded as interesting too. I would here take the liberty to mention that I think all the military and ordnance stores should be moved without a moment's delay to Springfield or some interior part of the country. Springfield should be the place, because the elaboratory is there, and they will be more convenient to use as exigencies require. In their present situation their security is questionable; and, if an attack should be made in the eastern quarter, their loss is much to be apprehended. Before I quit this subject, I would beg leave to observe also that the disposal and direction of military stores should

should be only with one body or with one person. At present this power is exercised through so many channels, that much confusion is introduced; and it cannot be avoided: nor will it be possible that matters in this line should be conducted with any degree of propriety, unless Congress come into some regulations respecting them. The inclosed extract of a letter from general Heath will prove the expediency. Many other instances might be mentioned, were it necessary.

The desertions from our army of late has been very considerable. General Howe's proclamation, and the bounty allowed to those who carry in their arms, have had an unhappy influence on two many of the soldiery; in a particular manner on those who are not natives. * * *

I could with some means could be devised to cause more frequent desertions of [*the enemy's*] troops. Congress may think of some expedient; a larger bounty might have some effect, and money to the foreigners in lieu of land. The bounty given by general Howe to those who carry in arms, is sixteen dollars as we are told, though his proclamation only expresses that they shall have the full value. To the inhabitants who will take up arms and join him, he promises land.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Morristown, May 5, 1777.

I WAS this morning honored with your letter of the third instant, with its inclosures.—General Arnold's promotion gives me much pleasure. He has certainly discovered, in every instance where he has had an opportunity, much bravery, activity, and enterprise. But what will be done about his rank?—he will not act most probably under those he commanded but a few weeks ago.

I trust the appointment of Mr. Ludwick as superintendant of bakers will have the salutary consequence you mention; I have been long assured that many abuses have been committed for want of some proper regulations in that department.

By major Troop, one of general Gates's aides, and who left Albany on tuesday last, I am informed the accounts of general Carleton's approach towards Ticonderoga were premature. He says general Gates received a letter before he came away, from brigadier-general Wayne, of the twenty-fourth ult. in which he mentioned nothing of it;—that three thousand troops had arrived there, all in high spirits and health, except nine;—and

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that

that that post could never be carried without the loss of much blood. The proceedings of Congress and your letter of the twenty-ninth ultimo were the first and only information I had of Mr. Carleton's being on the lake, having heard nothing upon the subject from general Gates or any other person.

In my last I mentioned that sixteen dollars bounty were given by general Howe to deserters with arms. I have reason to believe from information received since, and which seems to be generally credited, that he has advanced the bounty to twenty-four dollars.

It is much to be wished that our printers were more discreet in many of their publications. We see, almost in every paper, proclamations or accounts transmitted by the enemy, of an injurious nature. If some hint or caution could be given them on the subject, it might be of material service.

By a person who has just arrived here, it is reported that general Wooster is dead of his wounds.

I would mention to Congress that in a day or two our military chest will be exhausted. I beg that a supply may be forwarded as soon as possible: if there should be a failure, we shall have many things to apprehend.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

I have enclosed a list of stores lost at Danbury. You will also receive a New-York paper, by which you will see the enemy's account of that affair, and how little they have regarded a true state. We are told certainly they had forty-seven men killed: and, from the accounts that have been received, I think it may be fairly concluded that their loss was much more considerable than they make it.

SIR,

Morrisstown, May 9, 1777.

THIS will be delivered you by colonel Conway, an Irish gentleman in the service of France, who came passenger in the *Amphitrite*, and was introduced to me yesterday by a letter from Mr. Deane and one from general Heath, copies of which are transmitted.

This gentleman waits on Congress to obtain an appointment in the army of the states, and, from Mr. Deane's recommendation, is an officer of merit. He says no particular command was agreed on between him and Mr. Deane; nor does he wish otherwise than that Congress should exercise their own discretion; at the same time he observes that it will be mortifying to him

him to hold a rank under that of messieurs De Fermoy and De Borre, who were inferior officers in their own service, and subject to his command.—He can give the character of several of the officers who were passengers with him.

I cannot pretend to speak of colonel Conway's merits or abilities, of my own knowledge, having had but little opportunity to be acquainted with him. From what I can discover, he appears to be a man of candor: and if he has been in service as long as he says he has. I should suppose him infinitely better qualified to serve us, than many who have been promoted, as he speaks our language. He seems extremely anxious to return to camp, as the campaign may be expected to become active every day; and wishes Congress to determine whatever command they may think proper to honor him with, as soon as they shall think it expedient.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

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Head-Quarters, Morristown, May 9, 1777.

THE inclosed is a copy of a letter which was handed to me by monsieur Mottin de la Balme, from Silas Deane, esquire. For a more particular account of his merit and services, I must refer you to himself. I have sounded him as to his expectations, and find that nothing under a lieutenant-colonelcy of horse will content him. If you should, from his own account, or from what you can collect from others, think proper to confer this rank upon him, there is no vacancy in any other corps except that of colonel Sheldon.

I am afraid we shall never be able to find places vacant, equal to the expectations of the French gentlemen who are now here, much less for those that will follow. The high rank conferred upon those who first came over, many of whom had no pretensions either from their services or merit, has naturally raised the expectations of those who come properly recommended, to such a pitch, that I know not what will satisfy them. Indeed it is not to be imagined that a gentleman and an old soldier can submit to be commanded by a person in this country, whom he remembers to have been his inferior in France. I know not how we can remedy this evil, or put a stop to the growth of it, but by being very circumspect for the future, on whom we confer rank above that of a subaltern.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

Sir

SIR,

Morrisfown, May 10, 1777.

SINCE I had the honor of addressing you on the fifth instant, nothing material has occurred.

Inclosed you will be pleased to receive a general return of our forces in Jersey, the sixth instant, which is the first I have been able to obtain with any degree of accuracy.

I have not heard from general De Haas since his promotion. As soon as I was informed of it, I wrote and requested him to repair to camp: but, having received no answer, I am apprehensive my letter miscarried. I wish Congress to give him notice of his appointment, and directions to join the army, if he accepts his commission and is not prevented by indisposition.

Through the board of war I have been favored with a copy of general Gate's letter of the twenty-ninth ultimo. Hudson's-river and the passes in the Highlands I always consider as objects of great importance, and accordingly have provided for their security in the best manner my judgment could direct, and the circumstances of the army admit. If they are less secure than we wish them to be, it is owing to our inability and not to inattention. I have written to general M'Dougal, and will do it again, to employ much of his care upon this subject. War, in theory, and the modes of defence, are obvious and easy; but, in practice, they are more difficult. Unhappily for us, the means in our power do not always accord with our wishes or what would be our interest to pursue.

As yet none of the eastern troops have passed the North-river, except two small detachments from Connecticut and Rhode-Island, amounting to about two hundred and seventy, which missed my orders till they had got over. These I shall send back after we are more reinforced, unless the movements of the enemy in this quarter make their detention necessary. The rest of the eastern troops which have marched (except the seven regiments from Massachusetts and three from New-Hampshire, ordered immediately to Ticonderoga) are at and on their way to Peekskill, as mentioned in my letter of the third,—where they are to remain with all the York troops except Vanschaick's and Gansevoorts now at the northward, till general Howe's designs and intended operations are better understood. This disposition appearing to me and my general officers the best that could be made in our state of uncertainty, was adopted. The two troops of horse, recommended by Congress to be sent to general Gates, shall go as soon as circumstances will admit. At present we have not more than are constantly employed at the different posts,

General

General Heath, in a letter of the thirtieth ultimo, mentions that the military chest at the eastward is exhausted, and that a supply will be wanted much to defray the expenses which will arise on the removal of the military and ordnance stores to Springfield. He says Mr. Hancock was to write upon the subject, and requested I would also mention it to Congress in my first letter.

Accounts have been frequently exhibited of late by the officers, respecting subsistence while recruiting and on their march. As I do not recollect the provision Congress have made in such cases, I wish to be informed, and to be favored with a copy of their several resolves upon the subject.

A consideration of the return transmitted, and of the several detachments that have joined, and which form it, will shew Congress what our situation has been.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Morrisstown, May 12, 1777.

THIS will be delivered you by general Arnold who arrived here to-day in his way to Philadelphia. He seems to be anxious to settle his public accounts which are of considerable amount, and waits on Congress, hoping they will appoint a committee of their body, or of such gentlemen as they shall judge proper, to take the matter into consideration. This he considers the more necessary, as he has heard some reports have been propagated, injurious to his character as a man of integrity. If any such aspersions lie against him, it is but reasonable he should have an opportunity of vindicating himself and evincing his innocence.

I find he does not consider the promotion Congress have been pleased to confer upon him sufficient to obviate the neglect arising from their having omitted him in their late appointments of major-generals. He observes it does not give him the rank he had a claim to from seniority in the line of brigadiers, and that he is subject to be commanded by those who had been inferior to him. He further adds, that Congress, in their last resolve respecting him, have acknowledged him competent to the station of major-general, and therefore have done away every objection implied by their former omission. These considerations are not without their weight, though I pretend not to judge what motives may have influenced the conduct of Congress upon this occasion. It is needless to say any thing of this gentleman's

gentleman's military character: it is universally known that he has always distinguished himself as a judicious, brave officer, of great activity, enterprise and perseverance.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Morristown, May 12, 1777.

I WAS this morning honored with your letter of the tenth instant, accompanied by the proceedings of Congress of the day before.

The conduct of too many officers in withholding the pay of their soldiers, I am persuaded, is reprehensible, and has been the cause of uneasiness and of many desertions. Every measure in my power will be exerted to prevent such abuses in future, and every aid given to punish the offenders in an exemplary manner. But Congress will excuse me when I tell them it will be impossible to comply with their recommendation upon this subject, unless the general officers withdraw their attention from matters of the utmost importance, and such as require their constant care. Were this not the case, the dispersed situation of the officers at this time through the different states on the recruiting service would prohibit the enquiry. Nor do I apprehend the regulations empowering and enjoining the regimental paymasters to bring them to an account will be found competent to the end. Such officers will be proper to state the accounts in the first instance, and to receive vouchers, &c. but will not do to settle them finally, as their connexions with the regiments will subject them much to the influence of the officers.

I should suppose, if two or three gentlemen of integrity, and of ability in accounts, were appointed auditors to attend the army till the business is finished, it would be the best expedient that could be fallen on. They would be a check on the paymasters, and, I am persuaded, will be the means of the accounts being fairly and justly liquidated. If a settlement can be once obtained, I trust the same confusion will never take place again, as the paymasters will receive and pay all money due to the regiments, and account for it, and as the army is on a more permanent footing than it ever was before: for this, like most other inconveniences and difficulties which we have experienced, is to be imputed in a great measure to short enlistments and the frequent dissolution of our troops.

A return of the army in Jersey, as late as the sixth instant,

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I transmitted yesterday morning in a letter by Mr. Randolph of Chesnut-street, which you will probably receive to-day, and from which Congress will be able to determine the expediency of calling out the militia from Delaware and Pennsylvania.— Though it gives me pain that we should be under the necessity of recurring to such a measure, yet I should suppose it to be advisable. Our army is weak, and by no means equal to that of the enemy; and, till their designs are known and we are more reinforced with regular troops, we should be prepared in the best manner we can. I would observe, if the militia are called out, it should be for a fixed determinate time: for, though they will certainly return when that expires, yet that is more tolerable than for them to go off in parties every day as their whim and caprice suggest,—which has always been the case when the time was not stated. I would also observe, if it is possible, they should be engaged to march out of their states if ordered. If their service is located, they will move with great reluctance, if they do at all.

On Saturday a smart skirmish happened with a detachment of our troops who attacked a number of the enemy near Piscatawa, in which our men behaved well, and obliged the enemy to give way twice (as reported to me) with loss. The enemy receiving a strong reinforcement, our people retreated to their post.—I cannot give the particulars, as they have not been sufficiently ascertained. The picquets were also attacked yesterday by some of our parties from Boundbrook, and forced within their lines.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Morristown, May 16, 1777.

YOUR letter of the fifteenth I had the honor to receive last night at eleven o'clock.—The commission inclosed for monsieur Armand I shall deliver him as soon as I see him.—Agreeable to your request, I will give commissions to the brigadiers, and will ascertain their rank by their original commissions when I obtain them.—The inquiry directed respecting major Campbell, shall be made, and that be done which shall appear right.

I fear it will be hardly possible to satisfy the views and claims of some of the French gentlemen. The late promotion of monsieur Malmady, though highly honorable, and such as should be considered fully if not more than adequate to his pretensions,

tenfions, taken upon any principle, does not come up to his demands. He arrived here yesterday morning, and has been writing to me upon the subject. From the high marks of distinction but too readily conferred upon these men in many instances, they seem to have lost sight of what is just and reasonable. It would have been happy for us, particularly for me and for the gentlemen themselves, if a too easy grant of favors had not induced them to contemn all rank in our army under that of field-officers:—nor is it in my power to give commands to every appointment. I shall inform monsieur Armand (and reconcile him to it in the best manner I can) that there is no vacancy for him at present: and I would beg leave to suggest, that, where promotions are made in future from political and honorary motives, it would be well for Congress to explain to the gentlemen that it may be some time before they can be put in actual command. This might prevent their entertaining suspicions of neglect on my part, which the situation of the army will not allow me to obviate. There is no vacancy for monsieur Malmady, of the rank he now holds, unless the merits of many other officers, who have served with reputation and much longer here, are to be overlooked to make way for him.—Such a measure will neither be practicable, nor prudent to attempt.

By a letter from general Heard who is at Pompton, I am informed that colonels Barton and Burckirk with three hundred tory levies from Bergen, on the morning of the thirteenth, attempted to surprize and cut off about seventy of his militia stationed at Pyramus. The officer happily had notice of their design, and eluded it by moving his post. It happened that the morning was foggy; and the enemy entering at different places, their parties engaged. General Heard says their loss could not be ascertained: but, from the reports of the inhabitants, ten of their men were killed and carried away at one time, and several wounded.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

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SIR,

Morrisstown, May 21, 1777.

INCLOSED I have the honor to transmit you a general return of the forces in Jersey. It is regimentally digested, and will shew the strength of each corps. I should not have sent it so particularly made out, had I not conceived the conveyance by

by which it goes from hence entirely secure.—I have nothing material to add respecting the enemy.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

P. S. I need not suggest to Congress the necessity of keeping our numbers concealed from the knowledge of the public. Nothing but a good face and false appearances has enabled us hitherto to deceive the enemy respecting our strength.

SIR,

Morristown, May 24, 1777.

I BEG leave to inform Congress, that, immediately after the receipt of their resolve of the twenty-sixth of March, recommending the office of adjutant-general to be filled by the appointment of a person of abilities and unsuspected attachment to our cause, I wrote to colonel Timothy Pickering of Salem, offering him the post in the first instance, and transmitting at the same time a letter for colonel William Lee whom Congress had been pleased to mention, to be delivered him in case my offer could not be accepted. This conduct, in preference of colonel Pickering, I was induced to adopt from the high character I had of him, both as a great military genius cultivated by an industrious attention to the study of war, and as a gentleman of liberal education, distinguished zeal, and great method and activity in business. This character of him I had from gentlemen of distinction and merit, and on whose judgment I could rely.

When my letter reached colonel Pickering, at first view he thought his situation in respect to public affairs would not permit him to accept the post. That for colonel Lee he sent immediately to him, who, in consequence of it, repaired to head-quarters. By colonel Lee I received a letter from colonel Pickering, stating more particularly the causes which prevented him accepting the office when it was offered, and assuring me that he would in a little time accommodate his affairs in such a manner as to come into any military post in which he might be serviceable, and thought equal to.

Here I am to mark with peculiar satisfaction, in justice to colonel Lee who has deservedly acquired the reputation of a good officer, that he expressed a distrust of his abilities to fill the appointment intended for him; and, on hearing that colonel Pickering would accept it, he not only offered but wished to relinquish his claim to it in favor of him, whom he declared he considered, from a very intimate and friendly acquaintance, as

a first military character; and that he knew no gentleman better or so well qualified for the post among us.—Matters being thus circumstanced, and colonel Lee pleased with the command he was in, I wrote to colonel Pickering on his return, who accepted the office, and is daily expected.

In this business I beg Congress to be assured, though colonel Lee was postponed in the first instance, their recommendation had its due weight; and that no motive, other than a regard to the service, induced me to prefer colonel Pickering. His acknowledged abilities and equal zeal,—without derogating from the merits of colonel Lee who holds a high place in my esteem,—gave him a preference: and I flatter myself the cause will be promoted in his appointment, especially as we shall have two good officers in lieu of one, who, I am persuaded, will do honor to themselves in the line in which they move.

Considering the passes through the Highlands of the utmost importance to secure, I sent generals Greene and Knox about a fortnight ago to see what had been done for their defence, and to consult with the general officers they should meet, upon such further measures as might be deemed necessary for their greater safety. The inclosed copy of their report will fully convey their sentiments upon the subject; to which I beg leave to refer Congress.—I have sent General Putnam to command in that quarter, and have instructed him to use every possible means in his power for expediting and effecting the works and obstructions mentioned in the report. Fearing that the cables might not be procured in a time, I have directed his particular and immediate attention to fixing the boom. However, as the cables would render that more secure, and will be extremely serviceable in the opinion of the officers,—if they are to be had in Philadelphia, I would advise Congress to order them to be purchased and forwarded without loss of time:—they cannot be got elsewhere. They must be proportioned to the width of the river, which is about five hundred and forty yards; and, as they will be of most use if diagonally laid, the gentlemen think they should not be less than four hundred and fifty fathoms long, and of the largest size that can be had. Unless they are large and substantial, they will answer no purpose, and will not sustain their weight when stretched.

I should be glad to know whether it be the intention of Congress that one of the already-appointed general officers may be assigned to the command of the light-horse, or whether they have in contemplation the appointing of one for this purpose:—if

—if the first, I shall immediately name one to that duty;—if the second, they will be pleased to choose one, as it is time we should have our arrangements complete.

I have nothing of importance to communicate, unless it is that seventeen ships are said to have arrived at New-York on the twenty-second, and that others were in the offing. A report has also prevailed, and has come through two or three channels, that governor Tryon (that was) is dead of the wound he received in the Danbury expedition: and one account is that lieutenant-colonel Walcot fell in the engagement at Ridgefield. I do not know how far the facts are to be depended on:—it seems certain that Mr. Tryon was wounded.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

P. S. As I do not know what particular purposes Congress had in view when they ordered colonel Harrison's regiment of artillery to be raised, I do not think myself at liberty to give any directions about it: but if they have no certain employment for it in view, I could wish them to order the whole, or such part of it as they shall judge proper, to join this army, as we are in great want of more artillery-men than we have.—It will not be necessary that the artillery should come.

SIR,

Morristown, May 28, 1777.

THE inclosed is a copy of a letter received yesterday from general Howe. Congress will perceive, by referring to the copy of his letter of the twenty-first of April transmitted in mine of the twenty-sixth, that he persevered in his demand for an equal number of prisoners to be returned for those sent out by him; which has been the subject of controversy between us. As general Howe has called upon me again for my final decision upon the subject, and Congress are fully possessed of it, having received transcripts of every paper respecting it,—I wish them to take the matter under their earliest consideration, and to inform me as soon as they can, whether the grounds on which it has been conducted by me are agreeable to their ideas, and whether my objections are or are not to be departed from. The affair is particularly stated in my letter of the ninth ultimo to general Howe, in answer to the paper addressed to me by lieutenant-colonel Walcot; copies of which were inclosed in my letter to the president on the tenth of the same month. The dispute, so far as general Lee is concerned, rests at present on their declaring him exchangeable, as other prisoners are, on
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the principle of equality of rank ; to ensure which, or his safety, lieutenant-colonel Campbell and the Hessian field-officers are detained. The other objection to returning their prisoners is, that a great proportion of those sent out by them were not fit subjects of exchange when released, and were made so by the severity of their treatment and confinement, and therefore a deduction should be made from the list.

Good faith seems to require that we should return as many of theirs at least as we received effectives from them,—I mean such as could be considered capable of being exchanged ; and perhaps sound policy, that the agreement subsisting for exchanges should continue. On the other hand it may be said that our prisoners in general, in the enemy's hands at present, will have greater security by our retaining them, and that general Howe will be less apt to relinquish any part of his claim, the more the number in our hands is diminished by an exchange.

I confess I am under great difficulty in this business. But what is more particularly the cause of this application is the latter part of the first paragraph of the inclosed copy,—“ *and for your determination respecting the prisoners now here, that I may make my arrangements accordingly.* ”—This is couched in terms of great ambiguity ; and I am really at a loss what interpretation to give it,—whether he intends that his conduct respecting them shall be as I advise—(this appears more favorable than can well be expected),—or that, if the previous demand is not answered in a satisfactory manner, he shall consider them on a different footing from that on which our former prisoners were, and the agreement totally dissolved. We are told government offered the prisoners they took to the India company, and they have procured an act dispensing with that of the habeas-corpus in particular cases of persons supposed inimical to them, &c. How far they or their commanders may adopt these measures, remains to be known :—I have only mentioned them as they respect the general subject of my letter.

Notwithstanding my recommendation agreeable to what I conceived to be the sense of Congress, lieutenant-colonel Campbell's treatment continues to be such as cannot be justified either on the principles of generosity, or strict retaliation ; as I have authentic information, and I doubt not you will have the same, that general Lee's situation is far from being rigorous or uncomfortable :—except his not being permitted to go at large

OFFICIAL LETTERS.

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on parole, he has reason to be content with every other circumstance of his treatment.

I am just moving to Boundbrook, from whence I returned yesterday morning. On monday morning a body of the enemy advanced near that post. They retreated, on seeing a detachment march to meet them. There was some firing at long shot, but without any great damage. We had only three men slightly wounded. What their loss was, I know not: three of their light-horse were killed.—By advices from the eastward, the troops are coming from Rhode-Island.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR, *Head-Quarters, Middlebrook, May 29, 1777.*

I THIS morning had the honor of your letter of the twenty-seventh with its inclosures.—I shall pay the strictest attention to the resolutions transmitted me; however, I am not without apprehensions that the regulation lately adopted, respecting chaplains, will not answer. I recollect when one was assigned in the course of last year to two regiments, the prevailing opinion was,—and that founded on a variety of reasons,—that it would not do; and the old mode of appointment was introduced again.

General Schuyler's proposal for raising one or two troops of horse, I think a good one. I intended to write to him upon the subject before the receipt of your favor, and shall do it by the first opportunity.

I arrived here yesterday evening: nothing of importance has occurred since; and I have nothing further to add, than that I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR, *Head-Quarters, Middlebrook Camp, May 31, 1777.*

SINCE I did myself the honor to write to you the twenty-ninth, I have received the inclosed intelligence. As it comes from a person of veracity, and one who is much in the confidence of the enemy, I have no doubt as to the fact of the two brigades having come over from New-York to Amboy, and also that a number of waggons have been brought from Staten and Long-Island. These accounts are corroborated by information of the same kind from several different quarters. But I do not place so much dependence upon the account of the intended at-

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tack upon this place, because I think, if such a matter was really in agitation, it would be kept a profound secret : I rather am of opinion that it is thrown out to deceive. But at any rate, taking it for granted that they are assembling their troops and carriages, what can they have in view but a move, either immediately, or when their reinforcement, (if they get any) arrives ? and if they do move, I can see no other object but Philadelphia. It is true they have seemed for some time past to have laid aside all thoughts of attempting that city by land : but if they had only the attacking this army in contemplation, they would never encumber themselves with a large train of waggons, which, if they were successful, would retard them in their pursuit, and, if defeated, would be in danger of falling into our hands.

I inclose you an extract of a letter which I received from general Sullivan.—If the two India ships which have been cut down are gone out to sea, I should suppose they are intended for the Delaware, because they are not capable of performing a rough or long voyage. This, if true, looks as if a sudden corresponding move by land was intended ; for they will never send their ships long before their troops.

These, you will please to observe, are mere conjectures upon circumstances : for the actions of the the enemy have for a long time past been so different from appearances, that I hardly dare to form an opinion. But I would wish to profit by every piece of intelligence, and be prepared to ward off every danger that threatens. I would therefore recommend that the Pennsylvania militia, who are assembled at Bristol for the express purpose of guarding the river and opposing the passage of the enemy, should be put under the command of a good general officer, who would see that they are kept to their duty, and prepared for a sudden emergency. Except this is done, they may as well be at home.

I last night received a letter from general M'Dougal, an extract of which you have inclosed. By this it appears that a reinforcement is arrived, but whether from Canada or Europe, is uncertain. You will observe that he likewise mentions, that eight transports with foot, and a schooner with horses and hay, had fallen down.—We can only form conjectures at present of the place of their destination : but if they stand southward, Philadelphia is the most probable place.

I have the pleasure to communicate a very agreeable piece of intelligence which I have received from general Parsons, of the destruction of twelve of the enemy's vessels in Sag-harbor
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upon the east end of Long-Island. I give you his letter at length, which I think reflects high honor upon the conduct and bravery of colonel Meigs, his officers, and men.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, Middlebrook, May 31, 1777.

MONSIEUR Coudray is just arrived at camp, and proposes to set out to-morrow for Philadelphia. What his views are, I am uncertain, having had no conversation with him upon the subject: but I find an idea prevails that there is an agreement between Mr. Deane and him, that he shall have the chief command of the artillery. How well founded this opinion may be, I cannot determine: but if it be true, it may involve the most injurious consequences. General Knox, who has deservedly acquired the character of one of the most valuable officers in the service, and who, combating almost innumerable difficulties in the department he fills, has placed the artillery upon a footing that does him the greatest honor,—he, I am persuaded, would consider himself injured by an appointment superceding his command, and would not think himself at liberty to continue in the service. Should such an event take place in the present state of things, there would be too much reason to apprehend a train of ills, such as might convulse and unhinge this important department.

Supposing monsieur Coudray to have made such an agreement, the case is of great difficulty, and, in my opinion, is worthy of the most delicate consideration of Congress. Yet may not means be still devised to satisfy this gentleman by appointing him to some command not derogatory to his promised rank, and which will be agreeable to him? From the recommendations we have had of him. I am obliged to esteem him of high character, and of great knowledge in what he professes: and, from this consideration and the manner in which he is mentioned to us, it appears that much address and delicacy must be used, to conciliate matters.

Many reasons, besides those I have noted, might be assigned for continuing general Knox first in command in this department, which, on reflection, will readily occur. I would only observe, without insinuating the most distant shadow of distrust of monsieur Coudray's honor, candor, or integrity, that, on the general maxims of prudence and policy, it may be questioned with much propriety whether so important a command as that
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GENERAL WASHINGTON'S

of the artillery should be vested in any but a native, or one attached by the ties of interest to these states.

Congress will be pleased to excuse the freedom I have used upon this occasion, and, I trust, will impute it to the importance of the subject which gave rise to it.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, Middlebrook, June 2, 1777.

THE inclosed copies of generals Gates and Poor's letters, which just now came to hand, contain the latest advices from the northern army. These I thought it proper to transmit, as I am not authorized to conclude that general Gates had written to Congress upon the subject of their contents. I wish our accounts from that quarter may be happy, if Mr. Carleton makes an attack.—The shameful deficiency in all our armies affords but too just grounds for disagreeable apprehensions: if the quotas assigned the different states are not immediately filled we shall have every thing to fear. We shall never be able to resist their force, if the militia are to be relied on; nor do I know whether their aid, feeble and ineffectual as it is, is much to be expected.—Can no expedients be devised to complete the regiments, and to rouse our unthinking countrymen from their lethargy?—If there can, the situation of our affairs calls loudly for it.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

P. S. Mr Boudinot, commissary-general for prisoners, will deliver this. He goes to Philadelphia on business respecting his department, and has several matters to settle and adjust with Congress, which are essential and necessary to a regular discharge of his duty. To him I beg leave to refer you upon the subject, and wish him to have your attention.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, Middlebrook, June 3, 1777.

I WOULD take the liberty of addressing a few lines to Congress on a matter which appears to me of importance, and which is considered in the same light by many of our officers, and others not in the military line.—The subject I allude to is the condition of many persons now with the enemy, who deluded by their arts and a misguided attachment to their measures, fled from the protection of the states, to find security with

with them, and who, in many instances, are in arms against us.

It has been suggested through various channels,—and the suggestion seems to be credited, especially as some have already escaped,—that many of these unhappy people, convinced of their error and the wicked part they have taken, would embrace the earliest opportunity of leaving the enemy and returning among us were they sure of being received into our friendship again, and of enjoying their property and the rights of citizens.

This subject, in the consideration of it, strikes me as important, interesting, and delicate,—involving many consequences worthy of mature deliberation and attention. As such,—and deeming myself incompetent to it,—I think it my duty to submit it to Congress for their discussion, to take such measures therein as they shall esteem necessary and right.

If these people, particularly those in arms, are ingenuous, in what has been hinted, and it is their wish, or that of any considerable part of them, to return,—I should suppose that it would be expedient and founded in sound policy, to give every suitable assurance to induce them to come. Such an event would be attended with salutary effects, would weaken the enemy, distress them greatly, and would probably have a most happy influence in preventing others from joining their arms. On the other hand, the indulgence may be liable to great abuse, supposing it not to be duly guarded: or if the effects produced by it should be partial, they will not be adequate to the ends in view. Yet, as the enemy on their part are using every device they are capable of, to seduce both soldiers and citizens from our service into theirs, and have succeeded but too well, it is generally though in the military line that something should be attempted to counteract them. Whether Congress will be of the same sentiment, and,—if they should,—what and how extensive the mode and indulgence ought to be, is entirely with them.

There is one difficulty which occurs with me, supposing the measure to be adopted.—What line of discrimination can be drawn upon such an occasion, though circumstances should differ and seem to require it? While the poor, deluded, ignorant, duped by artifices and a thousand causes to lead them wrong, have a claim to their country's pardon and indulgence, there are many of well-informed understanding, who, from their early-avowed hostile dispositions and inveterate disregard of her rights, and those who have taken a double and triple part, cannot have the same pretensions;—whose only view in returning

may be to serve their own sordid purposes, and the better to promote those plans they have steadily pursued.

One thing more I would observe, which is, that if Congress judge an adoption of measures eligible on the subject of my letter, the sooner it is come into, the better, for the most obvious reasons; and the time allowed for those to return who with the indulgence, should be fixed at a short period,—not longer, in my opinion, than till the † day of † next: otherwise they may avail themselves of the circumstance, and wait events to decide their choice. If any good consequences are produced, the means can be renewed and further extended.

Congress will be pleased to excuse me for thus freely communicating my sentiments, especially when I assure them that they are dictated by what I esteem my duty.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

P. S. The more I consider the subject of my letter, the more important and interesting it appears. I am inclined to think, if the measure proposed should be deemed expedient, that it will be better that the indulgencies and assurances for their return should be communicated through the medium of some second, secret hand, qualified to offer them and negotiate the business, rather than by an act of public authority. Opportunities, I should suppose, may be found, by which they may obtain due information in that way, and which will not hold out to the enemy the same cause of suspicion and of vigilance to prevent their escaping. Whatever mode shall be considered most advisable, should be immediately adopted. What time should be allowed in the first instance, I am at a loss to determine: if the continuance is too short, they may be danger of their not being apprised so as to get off: if it is too long, they'll defer matters to the last, and act then as circumstances of interest dictate.—To err in the former will be least injurious.

SIR, *Head-Quarters, Middlebrook, June 5, 1777.*

INCLOSED you will receive a copy of a letter from general Howe, of this date. You will perceive how extremely pressing he is for an answer to the demands in his letters of the twenty-first of April and twenty-second ultimo. As I refer-

† Left blank in the original.

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red the consideration of them to Congress in mine of the twenty-eighth of May requesting their opinion, I entreat that they will not defer giving it, that I may return an answer. I shall impatiently wait their sentiments, and flatter myself I shall have them by the most speedy and early conveyance.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, Middlebrook, June 5, 1777.

I THIS morning had the honor of your letter of the fifth with its inclosures.—The resolution of the thirtieth of May, respecting the French gentlemen who came passengers in the Amphitrite, reached camp before your letter, and has excited much uneasiness in the artillery corps. The inclosed copy of a letter from general Knox will convey their anxiety upon the subject,—which I think it necessary to transmit, as well from duty as on account of his request.

The difficulties upon this occasion arise from the peculiar circumstances of most of the officers composing the artillery regiments at this time. I do not know, for my own part, what operation Congress precisely meant the resolution should have; but if the commissions which these gentlemen are to receive should give them rank from the date of those they had from the king of France, or from their compact with Mr. Deane, there are but few officers now in the artillery who will not be superseded in their command, unless some method is adopted to prevent it. This, I am persuaded, Congress had not in contemplation, because it is opposed to policy and to justice; and I am led to believe the resolution was come into for want of due information how matters were circumstanced in this instance.

The officers now in the artillery I am obliged to consider of great merit: experience has proved them to be most warmly attached to the rights of their country; and their conduct in the line of their profession has been such as does the highest honor to themselves and the gentleman who immediately commands them. Without derogating in the least from the character of the French officers who are to be commissioned, and whom I wish to receive every countenance they merit, there is strong reason to doubt (laying aside every consideration of policy) whether they have seen as much real service as our own in the course of two campaigns. It would be hard, not to say unjust, that the latter should lose their command when they have a claim to every mark of favor, and after they have taken great pains

pains to form their companies: the service requires that they should not; and I am convinced the event would be attended with the most fatal consequences.

But what is to be done?—This is a case of difficulty, view it as you will.—I am not for rejecting the French gentlemen:—far otherwise,—I am for employing them: and public faith, and the encouragements given to bring them over, demand that it should be done. After much thought and consideration upon the subject, two modes occur to me, as the only possible ones by which it can be effected, and by which the inconveniences I have mentioned can be remedied. One is, that a new corps of artillery should be formed, and these gentlemen attached to it. This we have reason to fear, cannot be done, from the difficulties we have experienced in raising men, and from their having no interest or connexions with the people. Their situation in such case, if they are men of sentiment and active dispositions, would be irksome and distressing.—The other is, that our present officers now under consideration should have their commissions antedated, to give them precedence of rank: and this may be done with the greater propriety as most of them were intended to hold the posts they now sustain, before the French gentlemen had any claim upon us. It is true they were not commissioned, because the old corps existed under the first arrangement. Further it is said,—and there is no doubt of the fact,—that these gentlemen were promoted by brevet just before their departure from France, merely to give them rank here;—antecedent to which, our officers were superior to them in this point; and these brevets only confer local rank, confined to the French American colonies.

This latter mode appears the most eligible: if it is adopted, they will be distributed through the corps as assistant officers. Their want of a knowledge in our language incapacitates them for command in the first instance; and not only so, but to place them at the head of companies, over officers that have been at great trouble, pains and expense in raising the men, would be both unmilitary and unjust.—I shall now quit the subject, wishing that whatever will best conciliate matters and advance the public good, may be done; suggesting at the same time with all deference, as it is much easier to prevent evils than to remedy them after they have happened, it will be well, in all cases of foreign and indeed other applications, that the consequences, which granting them will involve, should be maturely weighed and taken in every point of view. In the present case of difficulty, things, I am persuaded, might have been adjusted
with

with the greatest facility, had the committee of foreign application been fully possessed of all the circumstances respecting the artillery regiments.

By a letter from general Gates, of the second instant, transmitting a copy of one from general Poor, the enemy who were at Split-Rock according to their last advices which I forwarded, have returned down the lake. Captain Whitcomb had been sent out to reconnoitre, and reported on his return that only one boat remained.

From sundry accounts from New-York, there is reason to believe the enemy are on the point of making some expedition. Their preparation of ships for troops, light-horse, &c. indicates that they intend to go by water. What their object is, yet remains a secret. The inclosed copy of an examination is very particular, and as recent as any that I have received.—The person who gave the information belongs to Cape-May county, and appeared to be a sensible intelligent lad. A deserter of the seventy-first this moment came in: you also have his examination inclosed.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, Middlebrook, June 8, 1777.

I WAS this morning honored with your favor of the sixth instant, with its inclosures.—I am extremely happy in the approbation Congress have been pleased to express of my conduct respecting the proposed cartel for the prisoners, and shall govern myself by the principles which influenced me on that occasion, and such other as shall appear right and just, should there be any further negotiation on the subject.

I shall order a return to be made of the chaplains in service, which shall be transmitted as soon as it is obtained. At present, as the regiments are greatly dispersed, part in one place and part another and accurate states of them have not been made, it will not be in my power to forward it immediately. I shall here take occasion to mention that I communicated the resolution appointing a brigade-chaplain in the place of all others, to the several brigadiers. They are all of opinion that it will be impossible for them to discharge the duty; that many inconveniences and much dissatisfaction will be the result; and that no establishment appears so good in this instance as the old one. Among many other weighty objections to the measure, it has been suggested that it has a tendency to introduce religious disputes

putes into the army, which above all things should be avoided,—and in many instances would compell men to a mode of worship which they do not profess. The old establishment gives every regiment an opportunity of having a chaplain of their own religious sentiments,—is founded on a plan of a more generous toleration,—and the choice of chaplains to officiate has been generally in the regiments. Supposing one chaplain could do the duties of a brigade (which supposition however is inadmissible when we view things in practice), that being composed of four or five, perhaps in some instances, six regiments, there might be so many different modes of worship. I have mentioned the opinion of the officers and these hints to Congress upon this subject, from a principle of duty, and because I am well assured it is most foreign to their wishes or intention to excite, by any act, the smallest uneasiness and jealousy among the troops.

There remains no room to believe otherwise than that the enemy are on the point of moving: this is confirmed by intelligence from all quarters, and through so many different channels, that we must consider it certain. Whether they will move by land or water, or by both, cannot be ascertained; nor is their destination precisely known: but every circumstance points out Philadelphia as their object. Being of this opinion, I have directed the return of general Mifflin. Before he left Philadelphia, I wrote, countermanding the order for his coming here; but he did not receive my letter.—I would also mention to Congress that I think the military stores, lately arrived, and at or coming to Philadelphia, should be removed to a place of perfect security. Though I would not excite needless uneasy apprehensions, prudence requires that things so essential should not be exposed to risk.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, Middlebrook June 13, 1777.

INCLOSED you will receive a copy of a letter from me to lord Cornwallis, on the inhuman treatment of lieutenant Martin by a party of the enemy's horse. My remonstrance and sending his corpse produced nothing more than a short answer from his lordship, which you also have. It was thought unnecessary to view the body, the fact being admitted and justified.

I have also taken the liberty to inclose a copy of my letter

to

to general Howe, in answer to his of the twenty-first of April, twenty-second of May, and fifth instant. From the latter part of the first paragraph in that of the twenty-second of May, I was induced to propose an exchange of all the prisoners now in his hands, so far as it can be effected on the principles of the agreement subsisting between us, except that of lieutenant-colonel Campbell and the Hessian field officers who are to be retained till general Lee is declared exchangeable. I did not expect the proposition would be acceded to: but, as his letter is of doubtful meaning in this instance, I thought it expedient to make the offer,—first, as it will be a happy event if we release our prisoners,—and secondly, as the proposition may draw from him an explanation of his sentiments, though he should reject it.

The New-York paper of the ninth instant I transmit for your perusal: it contains an extract of a letter from governor Tryon to Christopher Billop of Long-Island. This extract, I think, is worthy of attention, and may be improved to great advantage, if published in the papers with such strictures and observations as it will well warrant, and as will occur to an ingenious pen. The enemy, on their part, use the most artful publications, and avail themselves of every thing they can, going from us. We should profit, where we can, by their productions.

I would mention to Congress that several officers in the corps of cavalry have applied to me, to know in what point of view their horses are considered,—Whether as public property, or as private belonging to themselves, to be furnished at their own expense. When colonel Sheldon's regiment was ordered to be raised, the officers thought the horses should be a matter of public charge: but as it never had been determined, and I was not perfectly satisfied with the customs in such cases, I did not consider myself authorised to decide upon it. I promised to recommend it to the consideration of Congress; and this I have done since on similar occasions. The officers urge, that, as horses are essential to the discharge of their duty, they should be provided at the public expense; that they have risen to such enormous prices, that, if the contrary is established, they must, from the nature of the service, not only sink their pay, but make a large sacrifice of their private interest.

Though the practice may have been against their application in other armies, yet their reasoning seems plausible, and to be founded in justice. There are objections too against the measure, but not of sufficient validity, in my opinion, to oppose to their

their claim. Another reason may be suggested, why the public should find them horses, which is, that if they were to provide them themselves, the apprehension of losing them might prevent a proper discharge of duty, and in some cases produce too great a degree of cautious prudence.

This matter I have thought it necessary to lay before Congress, not doubting but it will have that attention which it may seem to deserve.—There is one thing more I would add upon the subject, which is if their application is considered just, I should suppose it best to fix a certain determinate sum to be allowed for the horses they have bought and may have occasion to purchase, in preference to leaving it to their discretion and judgment.

It being evident, so far as we can reason from circumstances and appearances, that general Howe designs Philadelphia to be the first object of his pursuit, or the defeat of this army,—and, for one or both of these purposes, is collecting nearly his whole force at Brunswick,—a board of general officers determined yesterday evening after mature deliberation, that all the continental troops at Peekskill and its dependencies, except one thousand effectives, should be immediately marched to reinforce this army. That number, with the convalescents, and such aids of militia as are now and may be assembled in case of emergency, was deemed competent to the defence of those posts against any attempts that may be made to possess them in the present situation of things.

I have inclosed a general return shewing our whole strength in Jersey at this time, from which it will appear our circumstances in this respect are by no means so desirable as could be wished. I esteem it my duty to transmit information of this sort from time to time to Congress, and am encouraged the more to do it from a conviction that the, sensible of the necessity of the most profound secrecy, will not suffer the least intimation of our numbers to transpire.

June 14.—Your favor of the thirteenth, with its inclosures, was received last night.

Having proposed to general Howe an exchange of the prisoners now in his possession, as you will perceive by the inclosed copy of my letter, and also added, that, "*his conduct towards prisoners would govern mine,*" it appears to me that it would be improper to transmit him a copy of your first resolution of the tenth instant, till we have something more from him on the subject proposed. I confess I did not, nor do I yet, understand the paragraph of his letter of the twenty-second ul-

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time to which I have alluded, and which induced me to propose an exchange if that was his wish, and to subjoin, that his conduct to our prisoners should govern mine,—as a caution to prevent him exercising severity or a new mode of treatment of them, contrary to the spirit of the agreement between us, and the ideas entertained upon the subject when it was first entered into,—if such was his meaning.

Finding that there would be great difficulty in filling the battalions intended to be raised, I did not commission officers for all the sixteen additional ones: I apprehend such a measure would accumulate expense without increasing our strength, and therefore did not set the whole on foot.—I shall be happy, on governor Coswell's letter and your recommendation of colonel Shephard, that he should have a regiment: from the character given him, and the terms on which he offers his services, there can be no objection. Congress will be pleased to appoint him to the command they wish him to have; and I should think it advisable that he be ordered to march with his corps to join this army, leaving proper officers to recruit the deficiency.

I have perused monsieur De Coudray's opinion about the fortifications, and have no doubt but that it is well founded. I have not sufficient knowledge of them to pronounce an opinion with certainty myself.

You will observe by the New-York paper the execution of

***. His family well deserves the generous notice of Congress. He conducted himself with great fidelity to our cause, rendering [*his country essential*] services, and has fallen a sacrifice in promoting her interest. Perhaps a public act of generosity (considering the character he was in) might not be so eligible as a private donation.

June 15.—When I wrote yesterday, my information was that one division of the enemy was advancing on the Princeton road, and it was believed from the general movement of their army that they were proceeding towards Delaware. What their real design was, is not yet understood. Those that advanced on the road, after marching some distance, filed off to the right down Millstone river, and joined the other column on the Coryel-ferry road leading by Somerset court-house. One object of their movement might be to inclose general Sullivan and his division between their two columns: another (which most probable was the principal cause, if they did not mean to proceed to Delaware when they set out) to manœuvre us out of our present encampment into action upon disadvantageous terms. The first they could not hope to succeed in after general Sulli-

van changed his post to Rocky-Hill,—an event which took place on the evening before, and which it is presumed they were not well advised of when they left Brunswic. A considerable body of them remain at Somerset court-house, and on the communication between that and Brunswic.—We have been and are harrassing them with light troops; but they being in open ground with a large train of artillery, we cannot do it so effectually as could be wished.

I shall be glad to be informed whether general De Haas considers himself an officer in the army. He has never joined it since his promotion, or written a single line to me upon the subject. If he accepts his commission it will be well for Congress to order him to repair to the army immediately. The brigade intended for him is without a general officer, and has brought on a disagreeable dispute between two of the colonels, each claiming the command. This is not the only inconvenience:—officers of high rank remaining at home afford a bad example to others who are inferior, and grounds of application for the like indulgence.

This letter, except the paragraphs of this date, I intended to send yesterday, but was prevented by the movement of the enemy which rendered it unadvisable.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

P. S. By a person just now arrived with a letter from general Sullivan, the enemy's advanced guard is posted between three and four miles from Somerset court-house on the road to Coryel's ferry.

SIR, *Middlebrook, June 14, 1777, 10 o'clock, A. M.*

YOUR letter of yesterday, with its inclosures, I received last night. By this conveyance I shall not send a particular answer.—The enemy are in motion, and a body is advancing from Millstone towards Vanbieter's bridge: another division is on the road leading towards Coryel's ferry.—We are packing up, and making every preparation to act as circumstances shall seem to require.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

P. S. The letters accompanying this you will please to put in the post-office.

Head

SIR,

Head-Quarters, Middlebrook, June 20, 1777.

WHEN I had the honor of addressing you last, I informed you that the main body of the enemy had marched from Brunswick, and extended their van as far as Somerset court-house. I am now to acquaint you, that, after encamping between these two posts and beginning a line of redoubts, they changed their ground yesterday morning and in the course of the preceding night, and returned to Brunswick again, burning, as they went, several valuable dwelling houses. We had constantly light troops hovering round them as far as circumstances would permit: but, being secured on their flanks by the Rariton and Millstone, they were difficult to approach; and, without loss, effected their return to their former posts. This sudden and precipitate change in their operations has afforded matter for much speculation. We suppose their original design was to attempt an impression on our right, or to manoeuvre us out of our ground, or to advance towards the Delaware. Whether these conjectures were well founded, cannot be ascertained: but it is probable, if they had an impression in view, they found it could not be attempted without great loss—(as to bringing on an attack, they effectually secured themselves against one by the post they took)—or if passing the Delaware was their object, that, from the temper of the people, the prosecution of it (if not impracticable) would meet with much greater opposition than what they expected: for I must observe,—and with peculiar satisfaction I do it,—that, on the first notice of the enemy's movements, the militia assembled in a most spirited manner, firmly determined to give them every annoyance in their power, and to afford us every possible aid. This I thought it my duty to mention in justice to their conduct; and I am inclined to believe that general Howe's return, thus suddenly made, must have been in consequence of the information he received that the people were in and flying to arms in every quarter to oppose him. I shall not reason upon this event: but I cannot but consider it as a most fortunate and happy one to us, and the most distressing Mr. Howe has yet experienced, unless he has schemes in contemplation beyond the reach of my conjecture.

I should have written to Congress more frequently respecting the enemy after they came from Brunswick, had I not been almost constantly on horse-back, and had their designs been clear: but as they were not, I did not wish to puzzle them with conjectures, more especially as I wrote general Arnold (with whom

I was

I was obliged to correspond, that he might co-operate with me as circumstances should require) to transmit them copies of my letters.

Inclosed you will be pleased to receive an extract of a letter from colonel Jackson of Boston to general Knox. The intelligence it contains is interesting; and I shall be happy to hear that the two brigs mentioned have captured the remainder of the Hessians, and more particularly so if the capture should not be far from the British coast, provided they arrive safe.

Twelve o'clock.—I just now received a letter from general Shuyler, a copy of which, and of its inclosures, is herewith transmitted.—The enemy, from appearances, having changed their views for the present, or at least rendered them dark and mysterious, I have sent expresses to brigadiers M'Dougal and Glover to halt their divisions, if they have proceeded any considerable distance from Peekskill, till further orders,—otherwise to return. I have also written to general Putnam to hold four regiments in readiness to embark for general Schuyler's aid, should further intelligence from Canada respecting the enemy's movements make it necessary. The uncertainty of general Howe's operations will not permit more to be done at this time. General Parsons arrived here this morning, and his division is marching to their ground towards the left of the lines.

I omitted to mention in my last, that, in consultation with my general officers, it was agreed that promotions should be regimental in the army for all officers under the rank of field-officers,—and for all of that rank, in the line of their state. This is now settled as a general rule; a right being reserved however, that it may be made for paticular merit out of this line, or refused for demerit or any substantial objection.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, Middlebrook, June 21, 1777.

I WAS last night honored with yours of yesterday morning, with its inclosures, the contents of which I shall duly attend to.

Having written fully yesterday, and nothing new occurred since, I have only to request that you will forward the papers respecting the commissary's department as soon as possible. For want of some certain and fixed line of duty in this instance, the

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commissary says it is impossible to conduct matters with any propriety.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

Head-Quarters, Middlebrook June 22, 1777. 11 o'clock, P. M.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor and pleasure to inform you that the enemy evacuated Brunswic this morning and retired to Amboy, burning many houses as they went along. Some of them, from the appearance of the flames, were considerable buildings.

From several pieces of information and from a variety of circumstances it was evident that a movement was in agitation, and it was the general opinion that it was intended this morning. I therefore detached three brigades under the command of major-general Greene to fall upon their rear, and kept the main body of the army paraded upon the heights, to support them if there should be occasion. A party of colonel Morgan's regiment of light infantry attacked and drove the Hessian piquet about sun-rise: and, upon the appearance of general Wayne's brigade and Morgan's regiment (who got ⁶⁻² to the ground) opposite Brunswic, the enemy immediately crossed the bridge to the east side of the river, and threw themselves into redoubts which they had before constructed. Our troops advanced briskly upon them; upon which they quitted the redoubts without making any opposition, and retired by the Amboy road.

As all our troops, from the difference of their stations in camp, had not come up when the enemy began to move off, it was impossible to check them, as their numbers were far greater than we had any reason to expect,—being, as we were informed afterwards, between four and five thousand men. Our men pursued them as far as Piscatawa: but finding it impossible to overtake them, and fearing they might be led on to the main body, they returned to Brunswic.

By information of the inhabitants, general Howe, lord Cornwallis, and general Grant, were in the town when it was first given: but they quitted it very soon after the alarm.

In the pursuit, colonel Morgan's riflemen exchanged several sharp fires with the enemy, which, it is imagined, did considerable execution.—I am in hopes that they afterwards fell in with general Maxwell, who was detached last night with a strong party.

party, to lie between Brunswic and Amboy to intercept any convoys or parties that might be passing: but I have yet heard nothing from him.

General Greene desires me to make mention of the conduct and bravery of general Wayne and colonel Morgan, and of their officers and men, upon this occasion, as they constantly advanced upon an enemy far superior to them in numbers, and well secured behind strong redoubts.

General Sullivan advanced from Rocky-Hill to Brunswic with his division; but, as he did not receive his order of march till very late at night, he did not arrive till the enemy had been gone some time.

I have sent down lord Sterling's division to reinforce general Maxwell; and in the morning I shall move the main body of the army to some secure post nearer Amboy, from whence we can with more ease annoy the enemy, than from this distance.—I am inclined to think they mean to cross to Staten-Island: if they do, we may perhaps find an opportunity of making a stroke upon their rear: at any rate we shall have a chance of obliging them to make a total evacuation of the state of Jerfey.—I have the honor to &c.

SIR,

Camp at Quibbletown, June 25, 1777.

When I had the honor to address you last, it was on the subject of the enemy's retreat from Brunswic to Amboy, and of the measures pursued to annoy them. At the time of writing, the information I had received respecting their loss was rather vague and uncertain: but we have reason to believe, from intelligence through various channels since, that it was pretty considerable, and fell chiefly on the grenadiers and light infantry who formed their covering party. The inclosed copy of a letter, containing the information of a person just from New-York, corresponds with other accounts on this head, and with the declarations of some deserters. Some of the accounts are, that officers were heard to say they had not suffered so severely since the affair at Princeton.

After the evacuation of Brunswic, I determined, with the advice of my general officers, to move the whole army the next morning to this post, where they would be nearer the enemy and might act according to circumstances. In this I was prevented by rain, and they only moved yesterday morning. I have advanced lord Sterling's division and some other troops
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lower down in the neighbourhood of Metuchin meeting-house, and intended to have posted more there; but found, on reconnoitring the ground, that it was low and disadvantageous, and still more unfavourable through a scarcity of water. These reasons, added to that of there not being the smallest prospect of attacking the enemy in Amboy with a probability of success,—secured on their flanks by water, and in their front by strong redoubts across the Neck,—would not permit me, either in my own opinion or that of my general officers, to keep any greater body of men in that quarter, where they would have been dispersed, and of consequence extremely insecure.

I have light parties lying close on the enemy's lines, to watch their motions, and who will be ready to act in conjunction with lord Sterling's division and such other troops as it may be necessary to detach; though I think,—and so do the rest of the officers,—that no event is likely to take place that will require more, since the idea of forcing their lines, or bringing on a general engagement on their own ground, is universally held incompatible with our interest, and that that number is sufficient to avail us of any advantages we can expect to arise from their retreating from Amboy, supposing notice of the fact should be obtained. Their contiguity to the Sound, and the small distance across it (having boats prepared to pass in), will enable them to get off (should they so incline) against every prudent and justifiable exertion on our part. Whether such is their design, is more than I can positively determine but there is every reason to believe that they have been and are transporting their baggage to Staten-Island, and making every preparation to embark on board their transports for some new expedition.

Your favour of the twenty-fourth I just now received, and am extremely obliged by your cordial congratulations on the enemy's retreat from Brunswic, and favorable interpretation of the event to my conduct.—The resolution you did me the honor to transmit shall have my attention.

It is much to be regretted, that an express sent off to general Maxwell on saturday night, to inform him of general Greene's movement towards Brunswic that he might conduct himself accordingly, did not reach him. Whether the express went designedly to the enemy, or was taken, is not known: but there is reasons to believe he fell into their hands. If general Maxwell had received the order, there is no doubt but their whole rear guard would have been cut off. This the enemy confessed themselves, as we are well informed by persons in Bonemtown.

By a reconnoitring party just returned, it is reported as a

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matter of doubt whether any of the enemy have removed from Amboy; though it is almost certain they have transported a great deal of their baggage.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Camp at Middlebrook, June 28, 1777.

ON thursday morning general Howe advanced with his whole army in several columns, from Amboy, as far as West-field. We are certainly informed that the troops sent to Staten-Island returned the preceding evening, and, it is said, with an augmentation of marines, so that carrying them there was a feint with intention to deceive us. His design in this sudden movement was either to bring on a general engagement upon disadvantageous terms, considering matters in any point of view, —or to cut off our light parties, and lord Sterling's division which was sent down to support them, —or to possess himself of the heights and passes in the mountains on our left. The two last seemed to be the first objects of his intention, as his march was rapid against these parties and indicated a strong disposition to gain those passes.

In this situation of affairs it was thought absolutely necessary that we should move our force from the low grounds, to occupy the heights before them; which was effected. As they advanced, they fell in with some of our light parties and part of lord Sterling's division, with which they had some pretty smart skirmishing, with but very little loss I believe on our side, except in three field-pieces which unfortunately fell into the enemy's hands; but, not having obtained returns yet, I cannot determine it with certainty; nor can we ascertain what the enemy's loss was.

As soon as we had gained the passes, I detached a body of light troops under brigadier-general Scott, to hang on their flank, and to watch their motions; and ordered Morgan's corps of riflemen to join him since. —The enemy remained at West-field till yesterday afternoon, when, about three o'clock, they moved towards Spanktown; with our light troops in their rear and pursuing. The enemy have plundered all before them, and it is said, burned some houses.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

Head

Head-Quarters, Middlebrook, June 29, 1777, 9 o'clock P. M.

SIR,

I HAVE not been able to ascertain yet with any degree of precision the loss sustained by the enemy in the several skirmishes on thursday, though we have many reasons to believe it was much more considerable than what it was apprehended to be when I had the honor of addressing you upon the subject. The inclosed copy of a letter from lord Stirling contains the fullest and most particular information that I have received: and the accounts given by sundry inhabitants to persons who have been in the neighborhood where the skirmishes were, and where the enemy were encamped, countenance this intelligence.

As to our loss, as reported by the enemy, I am persuaded it is exaggerated beyond all bounds of truth or probability, being assured by lord Stirling that it was trifling,—and by such deserters as have come in, that they saw but very few prisoners taken. It would have been certainly known before this (that is, the number not yet returned), had not some of the parties, and I believe the most which were then out, joined the corps since detached.

In respect to the enemy's designs or intended movements, they are not to be determined. It is certain they got into Amboy yesterday evening; and, from advices this morning from officers sent to South-Amboy to observe their motions, there were strong reasons to conclude they were evacuating the town, as their horse had gone over to Staten-Island, and as several boats were also passing with baggage, and others with troops. There were further circumstances favoring this opinion, such as apparent breaches in some of their lines: yet general Sullivan informs me by a letter just now received, that, from all the intelligence he has been able to obtain to-day, he does not think they have any serious intention of quitting it, and that all their movements are a feint, calculated merely to deceive, and to cover some plans they have in view.

I have two brigades,—Scott's and Conway's,—now lying at and near Woodbridge, as corps of observation, and to act as circumstances may require. General Sullivan was down in the same neighborhood with his division, till this evening, when he returned, it appearing to him unnecessary to remain longer, and that the brigades I have mentioned would be sufficient for any event likely to take place.

I have the honor to be, &c.

VOL. II.

M

G. W.

P. S. June

P. S. June 30.—From intelligence received last night, the opinion that the enemy are evacuating Amboy seems to be more confirmed.

As the facts in lord Stirling's letter are rather taken up on report than from any certain knowledge of their having happened, I cannot consider them sufficiently authentic for publication; nor are they transmitted for that purpose, though I am well persuaded the enemy's loss was much more considerable than it was at first imagined to be. It has been reported to me to-day that the enemy took sixty-four prisoners in the whole.—Whether they were all of our army, or in part countrymen, I cannot decide; for having detached at that time a number of light parties, and many of them having fallen in with the corps ordered out since, returns could not be made with accuracy.—The prisoners taken by us were thirteen, two of whom are light dragoons, the rest infantry.—Generals Scott and Conway intended to move towards Amboy this morning: but it is probable the rain has prevented them.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, Middlebrook, July 1, 1777.

YESTERDAY afternoon the enemy totally evacuated Amboy, and encamped opposite to it on Staten-Island. General Scott entered directly after; and posting guards to secure any stores they might have left, he withdrew his brigade, and halted about four miles from thence. This it was expedient to do, it being night when he entered, and his remaining there might have induced the enemy, whose boats were ready, to throw over a superior force in his rear. He wrote me, he should return this morning, and bring off whatever stores he may find: though there is little reason to expect that they have left any thing valuable behind.—When I am more particularly informed upon the subject, I shall take the liberty of addressing you on the same.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Camp at Middlebrook, July 2, 1777.

THE inclosed copies of general St. Clair's letters, transmitted yesterday afternoon and last night by general Schuyler, I have thought it my duty to send you. The intelligence they contain is important and interesting; nor are there circumstances

ces wanting besides these, to induce a belief, or at least to raise a strong presumption, that the enemy have in contemplation a junction of their two armies by way of the lakes and the North-river. If they have their whole Canada force on the former, it is certainly their object.

On receiving these accounts, I wrote immediately to general Putnam to embark Nixon's brigade for reinforcing the northern army,—to wait however the arrival or near approach of generals Parsons and Varnum's brigades from this place, who march this morning,—or the coming in of an equal number of militia to supply their place before they sail. This I have done by the advice of my general officers, and is all that is thought practicable in the present uncertain indeterminate situation of things. The rest of the army here will be held in readiness to move according to information and circumstances.

As I have observed, if we were certain general Burgoyne was approaching Ticonderoga with his whole army, I should not hesitate a moment in concluding that it is in consequence of a preconcerted plan with general Howe, and that the latter is to co-operate with him, by pushing his whole force up the North-river, and aiming a stroke in the first instance and immediately against the Highland passes. But as the appearance of the enemy on the lake may be a feint calculated to amuse and distract (though it may seem like a real attack), to draw this army to Peekskill and more to the northward, that general Howe may with more facility turn his arms against Philadelphia,—it has been determined unadvisable for us to move till we have further proofs of his intentions, and that our conduct must be governed by his.

Our situation is truly delicate and embarrassing. Should we march to Peekskill, leaving general Howe on Staten-Island, there will be nothing to prevent him passing to South-Amboy, and pushing from thence to Philadelphia, or in short by any other route; though the marching such of his troops from the point opposite Amboy as were encamped there, and the sailing of the ships from Princess-bay yesterday morning, are circumstances indicating that an embarkation has or will take place. On the other hand, if the North-river and the possession of the Highlands are his objects, our remaining here till his views are certainly known may subject us to a risk that we wish to avoid.

Thus, let us examine matters as we will, difficulties stare us in the face. We shall attempt to consult, and to do the best we can.—I have written to generals Putnam and George Clinton

ton fully upon the subject, urging them to put forth every exertion in their power, and instantly to call in a respectable body of militia to aid in the defence of those important posts at this critical conjuncture. I trust they will come out; their services in all probability will not be wanted but for a very short time.

I must earnestly request that you will send Mr. Stewart, the issuing commissary-general, to camp immediately. There is reason to apprehend the army will be in great distress and confusion for want of issuing commissaries in three or four days. On Saturday, those with Mr. Trumbull declare they will leave him, without they are put on a different footing from what they now are. I need not mention the consequences that will result from such an event, if there are not others here to supply their places.

There is one thing more I would add, which is, that there are not more than forty thousand dollars in the military chest, and two months' pay due to all the army, except two or three regiments which have just obtained warrants. A hundred and fifty-six thousand, out of the last supply sent the paymaster, I was obliged to order to Peekskill for the troops in that quarter, whose demands are great and pressing also. I must earnestly entreat that you will forward a supply directly to the paymaster:—should we be obliged to move before the troops are paid, much uneasiness and murmuring will be the certain attendants, and, I fear, something worse.

As the enemy will adopt every stratagem and device to deceive and distract us,—notwithstanding the present appearance in favor of their making an expedition up the North-river I doubt not but you will have the most vigilant look-outs kept along Delaware-bay, and proper expresses and signals for communicating the earliest intelligence. I think it would be highly expedient that some sensible judicious men should be employed in that business at this time, who would view things as they ought to be, and from whose accounts certain inferences and conclusions may be drawn, so as to form a proper line for our conduct. The most fatal consequences may flow from false information at this period: things should be examined with all possible certainty. I shall not be surprised to hear of several ships appearing in or off Delaware, though general Howe's destination should be elsewhere. Their fleet give them the most signal advantages, and an opportunity of practising a thousand feints.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

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Sir, *Head-Quarters, Morristown, July 7, 1777.*
I WAS this morning honored with yours of the fifth, with sundry resolves of Congress to which I shall pay due attention.

No change has taken place in the situation of the enemy upon Staten-Island since I wrote to you on the fifth: but I have this morning received an account from Elizabethtown, which mentions that a person had just come from the island, who informs that small craft are constantly plying between New-York and the fleet, laden with officers' baggage and stores put up in packages, and marked with their names and regiments; and that transports are fitted up with stalls over their main decks for the reception of horses. This looks as if a longer voyage was intended than upon the North-river.

I have given notice to all the eastern states to be upon their guard, should the fleet put to sea and steer that way: and I think the works upon and obstructions in the Delaware should be carried on with spirit, and completed as far as possible, lest they should visit that quarter. I think the southern states should also be advised of the uncertainty of the next operation of the enemy, that they may also be making such preparations as they may judge necessary.

I shall make inquiry into the number of arms at present at Springfield: and if any can possibly be spared to the state of Connecticut, they shall have all or part of those requested by governor Trumbull. General Knox expects the return on Saturday from Springfield; and I can then determine the matter.

I am pleased to hear that a supply of money is upon the road, as there is two months' pay due to the troops.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

P. S. The inclosed piece of information is just sent to me by general Forman, which is confirmed in several particulars by two deserters from the fleet, who left it yesterday morning.

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Sir, *Head-Quarters, Morristown, July 9, 1777.*

THE inclosed copy of a letter from the commissary general of provisions, and the information you will receive from major Hoops, will convince Congress of the distress and confusion prevailing in that department. Without something is done in aid of Mr. Trumbull immediately, this army must be disbanded.

disbanded: if the present difficulties continue, it is impossible it can exist. I entreat Congress to take the matter under their most early consideration, and to make such provision as the exigency and importance of the case demands. I know not but we shall be obliged to move in the course of a few hours; when, from the situation of things in this line we shall have more to dread, than from the enemy.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Morristown, July 10, 1777.

I THIS morning received a letter of the seventh instant from general Schuyler, a copy of which, and of its inclosure, I herewith send you. The intelligence which they contain is truly interesting, supposing it just: but it differs so widely from what we had reason to expect from the accounts mentioned in general St. Clair's letters to general Schuyler (copies of which you would receive in his letter transmitted from hence last night by major Hoops) that I would fain flatter myself it is not true. I am the more encouraged to hope this, as captain Farmam's letter from Fort-Ann to brigadier Learned seems to be the foundation of the whole, and does not authorize the unfavorable and unhappy conclusions built upon it. I should rather suppose, if any accident has befallen us, it must have happened to the detachment of men from the Grants, under colonel Warner: for we find from general St. Clair's letters, he expected something from him.—The whole account is so confused that we cannot establish any certain deduction from it; and I shall be happy if it proves premature and groundless.

I am told by a gentleman who came to camp yesterday evening, that Nixon's brigade would certainly arrive at Albany on Tuesday morning, as he saw the vessels, in which it was embarked standing up the evening before with a fair wind.

If the event mentioned by general Schuyler should not have happened, we cannot doubt but general Burgoyne has come up the lake, determined, if possible, to carry his point,—I mean, to possess himself of our posts in that quarter, and to push his arms further. Supposing this not to have happened, as our continental levies are so deficient in their number, our security and safety will require that aids from the militia should be called forth in cases of emergency: if it has, there is now an absolute necessity for their turning out to check general Burgoyne's progress; or the most disagreeable consequences may be

be apprehended. Upon this occasion I would take the liberty to suggest to Congress the propriety of sending an active, spirited officer, to conduct and lead them on. If general Arnold has settled his affairs, and can be spared from Philadelphia, I would recommend him for this business, and that he should immediately set out for the northern department: he is active, judicious, and brave, and an officer in whom the militia will repose great confidence. Besides this, he is well acquainted with that country, and with the routes and most important passes and defiles in it. I do not think he can render more signal services, or be more usefully employed at this time, than in this way. I am persuaded his presence and activity will animate the militia greatly, and spur them on to a becoming conduct. I could wish him to be engaged in a more agreeable service,—to be with better troops: but circumstances call for his exertions in this way, and I have no doubt of his adding much to the honors he has already acquired.

In consequence of the advices from general St. Clair, and the strong probability there is that general Howe will pass against the Highland passes to co-operate with general Burgoyne, I shall, by the advice of my officers, move the army from hence to-morrow morning towards the North-river. If such should be his intention, we shall not be too early, as a favorable wind and tide will carry him up in a few hours. On the other hand, if Philadelphia is his object, he cannot get round before we can arrive there; nor can he well debark his troops, &c. and proceed across the land, before we can oppose him.—I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

Sir,

Pompton Plains, July 12, 1777.

When I had the honor of addressing you last, I hoped the intelligence received respecting our affairs in the northern department was not true, or at least that they were not so unfavorable as they were then represented. But the inclosed copy of a letter from general Schuyler, which came to hand yesterday evening, confirms it, most unhappily for us, in its fullest latitude. This event (the evacuation of our posts on the lake),—among the most unfortunate that could have befallen us,—is rendered more interesting by the manner in which it took place. I have no further information upon the subject than what the copy contains, and shall be happy to hear by the next advices, that the main body of the army, of whose situation general Schuyler

knew

knew with certainty, have not become prisoners: for I fear, from the disposition they discovered on this distressing occasion, they would have surrendered to the enemy, in case they fell in with them, though inferior in number.

In respect to general Schuyler's demands, it is not in my power to comply with the whole of them. Not a single tent can be furnished: the kettles will be, and are ordered on; and an express is going to Springfield for all the musket-cartridges, sixty barrels of powder, and a proportionable quantity of lead and cartridge-paper for his use. Ten pieces of artillery, with harness, are also ordered, with proper officers, from Peekskill. I have written to him to procure horses and drivers himself, as they are to be obtained with much more ease where he is, than here: nor can he be supplied with the heavy cannon which he requests, supposing them necessary,—not having one to spare from a more important use,—the defence of the Highlands. Colonel Putnam, I imagine, will be with him before this, as his regiment is part of Nixon's brigade,—who will answer every purpose he can possibly have for an engineer at this crisis. A supply of intrenching tools was sent him four or five days ago, in consequence of an application then made.

I should be extremely happy if our situation would allow me to afford him a large reinforcement of men: but I cannot with any degree of propriety, in the opinion of my general officers, send more to his aid at this time than a number of recruits on the march from Massachusetts state, belonging to some of the regiments under his command, who amount to six hundred at least, and are now, I expect, pretty well advanced towards Peekskill. With this augmentation to what he already has,—supposing general St. Clair and his force to have come in, and any number of his militia to have turned out,—he will have an army, equal if not superior to general Burgoyne's, from the only accounts we have obtained.—Besides this consideration, it is most probable that general Burgoyne will suspend his operations till general Howe makes a movement and an effort on his part. His designs, I think, are most unquestionably against the Highlands, and that he will attempt the execution as soon as possible.

We have been prevented marching to-day by the rain; but, as soon as the weather permits, shall proceed as expeditiously as we can towards the North-river, and cross or not, as shall appear necessary from circumstances.

In my last I took the liberty of suggesting the propriety of sending an active officer to animate the militia that may assemble

ble for checking general Burgoyne's progress, and mentioned general Arnold for that purpose. Being more and more convinced of the important advantages that will result from his presence and conduct, I have thought it my duty to repeat my wishes on the subject, and that he may without a moment's loss of time, set out from Philadelphia for that purpose.

When this arrives, it is likely general Howe's intention will be well understood: but whether it is or not, as there are strong reasons to believe his operations will be up the North-river and on the east side of it, I shall take the liberty to recommend the sending on the North-Carolina and other continental troops at Philadelphia, to join this army, unless Congress have some information that a southern expedition is intended, of which I am not apprised.

If Congress have taken colonel Proctor and his corps into the service of the states it will be expedient for them to come on with all the field-artillery which colonel Flowers the commissary may have ready. This I have been induced to mention, having heard Congress were about to adopt them, and as our demand for artillery is great. I would also observe that the situation of our affairs has become so delicate and embarrassing by the late misfortune we have experienced, that it is much to be wished some expedient could be come into, if there be any more efficacious than what has been already recommended, for filling and completing the several regiments. At present they only count in number, but not in force, being most shamefully deficient in their just complements.

Your letter of the eighth was duly received; and, agreeable to your request, I communicated to generals Greene and Knox the resolution of Congress respecting them and general Sullivan, the last of whom I have not seen since it came to hand.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

P. S. *Half after eight P. M.*—I this minute received a letter of the ninth from general Schuyler, a copy of which, and of the Proclamation alluded to, you have inclosed. I fear more and more that general St. Clair and his army are prisoners.

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Vanauker's, eight miles from Pompton Plains, July 14, 1777.

SIR,

I ARRIVED here this afternoon with the army, after a very fatiguing march, owing to the roads, which have become extremely deep and miry from the late rains. I intend to pro-

ceed in the morning towards the North-river if the weather permits: at present it is cloudy and heavy, and there is an appearance of more rain.

By the express who will deliver this, I just now received a letter from general Schuyler, advising for the first time that general St. Clair is not in the hands of the enemy. As the express has a large packet for Congress from general Schuyler, I presume they will be informed of all the intelligence he was possessed of respecting our affairs in his department, and therefore shall not trouble them with a copy of his letter to myself upon the subject. I should be happy if they had a more agreeable aspect than they seem to have.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Camp near the Clove, July 16, 1777.

I WAS yesterday evening honored with yours of the fourteenth.—I have heard nothing from the northward since my last.—I this day received advice from Staten-Island, that, on Sunday seventy sail of the enemy's ships fell down from the watering place to the Hook: but whether they have since gone out to sea, I have not heard. Till I have more certain information of the state of our affairs to the northward, and of general Howe's real intentions I have concluded to halt the army at this place, from whence I can either march forward or return as circumstances may require.

If general Nash should not have begun his march before this reaches you, be pleased to order him to proceed as far as Trenton only, and there wait my further orders. In case he should have marched, be pleased to dispatch an express after him with orders to halt at Trenton.

I am pleased to hear that you have taken colonel Proctor's corps of artillery into continental service. You will be kind enough to order them to join the army immediately: for I expect the light artillery in a few days from the eastward; and artillery-men will be wanted to man them.

I have no doubt but the militia from the western parts of New-England will turn out to general Schuyler's assistance, as I hope those of this state and Jersey will to mine, should they be wanted.

I shall be very happy if the committee of Congress can arrange the commissary's department in such a manner as will satisfy the officers concerned in the business, and at the same time serve to
sup-

supply the army with more regularity than has been done for some time past. I can assure you the complaints have been many of late, and not without foundation.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Camp at the Clove, July 16, 1777.

I BEG leave to congratulate Congress on the captivity of major general Prescott and one of his aides. The particulars of this fortunate event you will find in the inclosed extract of a letter this minute received from general Spencer, which, I presume, are at large in the packet Mr. Greenleaf will deliver. Lieutenant-colonel Barton who conducted the enterprise, and the small handful under his command, have great merit. I shall immediately propose to general Howe his exchange for that of major-general Lee, which if acceded to, will not only do away one ground of controversy between general Howe and myself, but will release lieutenant-colonel Campbell and the Hessian field-officers, and procure the enlargement of an equal number of ours in his hands.

In mine of this morning I desired that colonel Proctor's regiment should join this army without loss of time. Upon consulting general Knox, we are of opinion they had better halt at Trenton with general Nash till further orders, as the operations of general Howe are not yet perfectly understood.—I have nothing new from the northern department,—and only to add, that I have the honor to be, with great respect, sir, your most obedient servant,

G. W.

SIR,

Camp at the Clove, July 18, 1777.

I JUST now received a letter from general Schuyler, of the fourteenth instant, inclosing the proceedings of the council of war which he alludes to, a copy of which, and of his letter, I herewith transmit. He represents matters in a distressing point of view:—I believe they are bad; but I hope they are not so alarming as they are painted by him.

My letter of the twelfth would advise Congress how far his demand of necessaries had or would be complied with. In addition to the supplies then ordered, I directed a day or two after, six tons of musket-ball to be forwarded to him about Peekskill with all possible expedition, which I doubt not, have arrived

rived at Albany. As to sending him more troops than those mentioned in my letter above referred to, it is not in my power: and I am persuaded the force he now has, with such succour as may be had from the militia, if well conducted, would greatly if not effectually stop general Burgoyne's progress.

General Arnold arrived here last night, and will set out this evening for Albany. From his activity and disposition for enterprise, I flatter myself his presence and assistance in that quarter will be attended with happy consequences: I am well assured his utmost exertions will be employed to baffle the enemy's views: and, wishing that they may succeed,

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

To the Committee of Congress, on a visit to the Camp.

GENTLEMEN,

Camp at the Clove, July 19, 1777.

THE little notice I had of your coming to the army, and the shortness of your stay at camp, will more than probably occasion the omission of many matters which of right ought to be laid before you; and the interruption, which my thoughts constantly meet by a variety of occurrences, must apologise for the crude and indigested manner in which they are offered.

The completion of the continental regiments is a matter of such infinite importance, that I think no means should be left untried to accomplish it. Draughting, where the powers of government are adequate, would be the speediest and most effectual: but if it should be thought unadvisable to attempt this mode,—next to it I would recommend that the business of recruiting should be taken entirely out of the hands of the officers of the army, and that each state should appoint some person of known activity (one, for instance, who has been a good undersheriff) in each county or township, not only to recruit, but to apprehend deserters;—these persons to be liberally rewarded for each recruit and deserter whom they shall deliver, at stated periods and places, to officers appointed to receive, discipline, and march them to the army;—none of these recruiters to have the smallest power to act out of their own districts, but to be absolutely fixed to them:

A mode of this kind would, in my humble opinion, be less burdensome to the public than the present,—prevent the idle habits which recruiting officers contract, not only injurious to them-

themselves, but to others,—the most effectual means which can be devised for the recovery of deserters,—the surest way of keeping your regiments of equal strength, and of making the duty more equal in the detail of it: in a word many valuable advantages would result from it, whilst I can suggest but one reason against it,—and that (fully satisfied I am), when weighed in the scale of interest, will not operate,—I mean, the keeping so many officers in camp, who might be spared from the duties of the field till the regiments are stronger than at present. The sixteen additional regiments labor under such disadvantages in some states, as to render the interposition of Congress, in some shape or other, indispensably necessary.

With respect to food, considering we are in such an extensive and abundant country, no army was ever worse supplied than ours with many essential articles of it. Our soldiers, the greatest part of last campaign and the whole of this, have scarcely tasted any kind of vegetables,—had but little salt;—and vinegar, which would have been a tolerable substitute for vegetables, they have been in a great measure strangers to. Neither have they been provided with proper drink: beer or cider seldom comes within the verge of the camp, and rum in much too small quantities. Thus, to devouring large quantities of animal food untempered by vegetables or vinegar, or by any kind of drink but water,—and eating indifferent bread (but for this last a remedy is provided),—are to be ascribed the many putrid diseases incident to the army, and the lamentable mortality that attended us last campaign. If these evils can be remedied, the expense and trouble ought not to be obstacles: though some kinds of vegetables are not to be had, others are, which together with sour kroust and vinegar, might easily be had, if proper persons acquainted with the business were employed therein.

Soap is another article in great demand. The continental allowance is too small: and, dear as every necessary of life is now got, a soldier's pay will not enable him to purchase; by which means his consequent dirtiness adds not a little to the diseases in the army.

I have no reason to accuse the clothier-general of inattention to his department; and therefore, as his supplies are incompetent to the wants of the army, I am to suppose his resources are unequal. Ought not each state then to be called upon to draw such supplies from the country manufactories, as can be afforded: particularly of shoes, stockings, shirts and blankets,—articles indispensably necessary, and of which scarce too many can be

be provided :—in the mean while, every provision to be making, for clothing the troops uniformly and warm in the winter. It is a maxim which needs no illustration, that nothing can be of more importance in an army, than the clothing and feeding it well. On these the health, comforts, and spirits of the soldiers essentially depend ; and it is a melancholy fact, that the American army are miserably defective in both these respects. The distress most of them are in for want of clothing is painful to humanity, dispiriting to themselves, and discouraging to every officer. It makes every pretension to the preservation of cleanliness impossible, exposes them to a variety of disorders, and abates or destroys that military pride, without which nothing can be expected from any army.

The consequence of giving rank indiscriminately is much to be dreaded : great dissatisfaction has already arisen on account of bestowing this on officers of the civil departments of the army, on the inferior staff, waggon-master, &c. who, by custom, propriety, and every other motive, are excluded from it in all well-regulated armies. The too great liberality practised in this respect will destroy the pride of rank where it ought to exist, and will not only render it cheap, but contemptible. It is the policy of all armies to make it valued and respected, as a stimulus to emulation, and an incitement to bold and gallant undertakings : it must be very unadvisable therefore, in our infant state of war, to adopt novel customs to bring it into discredit,—which must and will be the consequence of making it too common, besides the disgust it creates in others.

An auditor of accounts, to be constantly with the army, is absolutely requisite. It is impossible for me, crowded as I am with other business, to examine and adjust the numerous complex accounts of the army with that correctness the public have a right to expect, before warrants pass for payment ; and without doing it, great impositions may follow. The provision for making regimental paymasters regulate all regimental accounts is altogether incompetent to the end proposed from it : for these men being appointed generally agreeable to the recommendation of the field-officers of the regiments they belong to, associating constantly with the officers of their corps, and in a great measure under their controul,—cannot be considered as sufficiently uninfluenced : nor are auditors at a distance from the army of much use, as it would require a delay not admissible, to send accounts to them to audit before they were passed and paid in consequence of warrants from the commander-in-chief of the army.

A good

A good geographer, to survey the roads and take sketches of the country where the army is to act, would be extremely useful, and might be attended with exceeding valuable consequences. He might with propriety have the chief direction of the guides, and must have a head to procure, govern, and pay them. If such a person should be approved of, I would beg leave to recommend Mr. Robert Erskine, who is thoroughly skilled in this business, has already assisted us in making maps of the country, and has (as I am informed) uniformly supported the character of a fast friend to America.

A small travelling press, to follow head-quarters, would be productive of many eminent advantages. It would enable us to give speedy and exact information of any military transactions that take place, with proper comments upon them, and thereby frustrate the pernicious tendency of falsehood and misrepresentation, which, in my opinion,—of whatever complexion they may be,—are, in the main, detrimental to our cause. If the people had a channel of intelligence, that, from its usual authenticity, they could look up to with confidence, they might often be preserved from that despondency which they are apt to fall into from the exaggerated pictures our enemies and their emissaries among us commonly draw of any misfortunes we meet with,—and from that diffidence of truths favorable to us, which they must naturally feel from the frequent deception they are exposed to by the extravagant colorings our friends often give to our successes. It would also be very useful to dispatch business in camp, being the most expeditious means of taking copies of orders or other matters that require to be dispersed, and would save a good deal in returns and other papers we are often obliged to get printed in Philadelphia. An ingenious man, to accompany this press and be employed wholly in writing for it, might render it singularly beneficial.

I am exceedingly embarrassed how to dispose of the French officers in general, but more especially the artillery officers who are come out under the sanction of a compact. I can think of no other way than that of forming a separate corps of them, and draughting men from the whole line to compose that corps: but even this will be attended with many disagreeable effects:—among others this is not the least, that officers will think themselves much injured to have the men they have had the trouble of raising, taken from them and given to others. There is something in this which is discouraging, and breaks the spirit of a good officer who prides himself in having a full and complete corps.

A doubt

A doubt has arisen, whether a person who belongs to any of the United States of America, and who owed allegiance to any of the said states,—that went to the enemy some time past, and since that time has been lurking about any of the fortifications, or about any of the encampments of the armies of the United States,—plundering and driving off cattle to the enemy, recruiting for them or committing any such atrocious crime,—or who is appointed an officer in the enemy's army,—can be tried by a general court martial, under the resolution of Congress of the twenty-first of August, 1776, and punished as a spy.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Camp, eleven miles in the Clove, July 22, 1777.

WE have been under great embarrassments respecting the intended operations of general Howe, and still are, notwithstanding the utmost pains to obtain intelligence of the same. At present it would appear that he is going out to sea. By authentic information, there are only forty ships at New-York; the rest are gone elsewhere, and have fallen down between the Narrows and the Hook: between these two places, the number, from the most accurate observation, was about one hundred and twenty yesterday. As I observed before, their destination is uncertain and unknown: but I have thought it my duty to inform Congress of these facts, that they may give orders to the militia to hold themselves in readiness to march on the shortest notice, in case Philadelphia should be their object. At the same time I am to request that they will have a sufficient number of proper look-outs fixed at the capes of Delaware (to whose accounts implicit confidence may be given), to make the earliest reports of the arrival of any fleet,—which Congress will transmit me by the speediest conveyance.

As the enemy will probably make many feints, and have it unhappily but too much in their power from their shipping, I would advise that the look-outs should be cautioned to be extremely accurate in their observations and reports, mentioning with as much precision as possible, the number of ships that may appear.—Our situation is already critical, and may be rendered still more so by inaccurate and ill-grounded intelligence.

From the advices received on saturday, of the movements of part of the enemy's ships, and the strong reasons there were to suppose general Howe would push up the North-river to co-
operate

operate with general Burgoyne, I detached lord Stirling with his division to Peekskill on Sunday morning:—they crossed the river that evening and the next morning. This movement will prove unnecessary, should his destination be to the southward. I have also ordered general Nixon's brigade from Peekskill to reinforce general Schuyler, from his representations of the inadequacy of his force to oppose general Burgoyne, and of the seeming backwardness of the people in that quarter to afford him aid.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

P. S. I think the works at Billingsport well worthy of attention; and it is expedient to effect their completion as soon as possible.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, Ramapough, July 25, 1777.

I HAVE the honor to inclose you a couple of letters which monsieur Davout, the bearer of this delivered me in his behalf. You will perceive by them that he is desirous of entering into our service, and what his pretensions have been in his own country. I have referred him to Congress to determine on what footing he is to stand with us.—He requests me to mention that he would be glad of a decision, and to be informed at once what can be done, whether he can be employed or not, and in what capacity.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Half after eight A. M. July 25, 1777.

I DO myself the honor to transmit you the enclosed letter from governor Franklin, which came this minute by express.—As Mr. Franklin was confined by order of Congress, I could not think myself at liberty to answer him on the subject of his request, and therefore have referred it to their consideration. At the same time I would observe his situation is distressing, and must interest all our feelings, as I have no doubt of the great indisposition of his lady.—I should suppose, after his solemn assurances, and being laid under such further restrictions as Congress may judge necessary to impose upon him, that he might be indulged to see her. Humanity and generosity plead powerfully in favour of his application, and I am certain it will be duly considered. If it is granted, he should have the earliest

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notice,

notice, or the end and the views of Congress may be disappointed in the death of Mrs. Franklin before his arrival.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

Camp at Ramapough, three miles from the Clove, July 25, 1777.

SIR,

I DO myself the honor to transmit you a copy of my letter to general Howe, of the sixteenth instant, proposing an exchange between generals Lee and Prescott. I dispatched it early the next morning, and presume it got to hand on the eighteenth. As yet I have not received his answer.

The amazing advantage the enemy derive from their ships and the command of the water, keeps us in a state of constant perplexity and the most anxious conjecture. We are not yet informed of their destination, nor can any plausible conclusions be drawn respecting it, at least not such as appear satisfactory. What renders the matter still more difficult and confused, is their extreme inactivity and delay: for it is certain they began to embark immediately after the evacuation of Amboy, and now remain between the Narrows and the Hook, or were there when I was last advised upon the subject. I have two active officers, with an escort, now out for the purpose of intelligence, and for reconnoitring their situation from Fort-Lee and along the river in that neighborhood.

Things being thus circumstanced, and various opinions, as to their real object, prevailing among us,—some supposing it to be Philadelphia, others the North-river, and others an expedition more easterly,—I would submit it to Congress whether the militia of the neighbouring counties should not be immediately called to the first, or at Chester,—the lower counties, at Wilmington. This measure appears to me highly expedient, and no objection can lie against it, of sufficient validity to prevent it, as a few days must certainly determine their real designs.—Should they be against Philadelphia, and they have favorable winds, their voyage may be made in a short time, when it may be too late to obtain their aid, and to arrange them properly for defence, supposing them to come in. I am the more induced to recommend this measure, as the several objects we have to attend to necessarily oblige this army to continue at a considerable distance from that place till their intentions are better understood; and as they might by a sudden and rapid push attempt

tempt to effect some material capital stroke before we could get there, unless there is a respectable force to oppose them; for, though no great dependence can be put in a militia acting alone, nor a vigorous opposition expected from them (from the nature of things) to a disciplined, well-appointed army, yet their operations may be greatly retarded by them, and may be checked till other succours arrive. The report of a force, especially if it is in any wise respectable, let it be of what sort it may, will have some influence on their conduct, and may prevent enterprises that would otherwise be undertaken.

From the intelligence we received on Saturday evening, that a number of the enemy's ships were standing up the North-river, —and in the course of that and the preceding day, that forty sail were in the Sound, going into Fairfield harbour, —I had not the least doubt in my mind but general Howe had in view a stroke against the Highlands and the fortifications there, and to co-operate with general Burgoyne. In consequence of these advices I judged it expedient to move the army the next morning, from our then encampment, towards those posts. Lord Stirling's division was ordered to take the route to King's-ferry, and to pass the river to Peekskill; and I proceeded myself with the remainder, which composed the main body, by the route leading through the Clove towards New-Windsor. We marched over a very difficult and rugged road till night, when we halted,—the first division having advanced about eighteen miles. In this situation we lay till yesterday morning, when, from the information received before respecting the enemy's fleet being at or near the Hook, and no further accounts of the ships in the Sound, a change in our measures took place. Stephen and Lincoln's divisions were ordered to proceed to Chester, (there to wait further directions, as a place from whence they may move with much more ease either to Philadelphia or Hudson's river, being seven miles nearer the former, and equally convenient to the latter) and general Greene's division to this ground. By dividing, and this arrangement, I am in hopes our movements will be more expeditious, wheresoever they may be necessary.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

P. S. In my letter of the twenty-third I mentioned I had ordered *Nixon's* brigade as a further reinforcement to general Schuyler:—I meant *Glover's*.

Four o'clock, P. M. This minute I received a letter of the twenty-second from general Schuyler, a copy of which, and of its inclosure, I herewith transmit. His letter of the twenty-first

first which he mentions has not come to hand.—Things seem still in an unpromising way in that quarter.—General Schuyler complains much of the want of artillerists:—it is not with me to satisfy his demands: he has at this time a much greater proportion of artillerists than this army, having regard to the quantity of artillery.

After sealing my letter, I received, by express from colonel Moylan, a letter advising that the fleet sailed from the Hook yesterday morning out to sea.

SIR,

July *, 1777.

I DO myself the honor to transmit you the enclosed memorandum of warlike stores wanted for an expedition to the river St. John's, which I received in a letter from general Heath, of the sixteenth instant.—The memorandum was sent that I might order the stores to be supplied.—Not knowing that Congress have such an expedition in view at this time, I do not conceive myself authorized to comply with the requisition; and therefore refer the matter to their consideration, to direct therein as they shall judge proper: but I would beg leave to observe, that I think the force, intended to be employed upon the occasion, would render infinitely more important services by reinforcing the northern army, and assisting in the repulse of general Burgoyne. The progress of his arms, and the deficiency in the quotas of men exacted from the states to compose our army, seem to forbid expeditions for conquest, and to demand our utmost exertions to maintain what we already have.—Congress will be pleased to write to the Massachusetts council on the subject, and a line to general Heath, that he may know how to govern himself respecting the application.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

Cross-Roads, sixteen miles from Morrisstown, 2 o'clock P. M.

SIR,

Your letter of the 26th, with its inclosures, I met on the road.—The subject of rank, which Congress have been pleased to submit to my consideration, shall have my attention

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* *Blank in the original:—probably July 27 or 28.*

as soon as circumstances will admit, and the result be made known.

General Greene's division, consisting of Muhlenberg and Weedon's brigades, is now here: it will proceed six or seven miles further this evening.—Generals Sullivan and Stirling's divisions have repassed Hudson's river:—the former will proceed by this route,—the latter by way of Paramus and Boundbrook or Brunswick.—General Stephen, with his own and Lincoln's division (general Lincoln being ordered to join general Schuyler) is marching on a back road from Chester, through Suffex, to Howel's ferry on Delaware.—Moylan's and Bland's regiments of horse, which were passing about Boundbrook and on the communication towards Woodbridge, were ordered to march on the first intelligence I received of the fleet's sailing.—Morgan's corps of light troops is also on the march through Brunswick, with directions to halt at Trenton till further orders, or till he gets certain information of the fleet in Delaware.—I intend in like manner that lord Stirling's division shall halt and remain there at Bristol, till we have further information of the enemy.—From either of these places they will be sufficiently near Philadelphia, and may proceed in time on any emergency.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Coryel's-Ferry, Jersey, July 30, 1777.

I DO myself the honor to inform you that I arrived here on the twenty-eighth at night with general Greene's division, one brigade of which passed the river that evening, that the whole might encamp the more commodiously. General Stephen, with his own and Lincoln's division, also arrived a little time after at Howel's ferry, four miles above this.

I have thought proper to halt the whole army at these two places and at Trenton till our knowledge of the enemy's destination becomes more certain. If the Delaware is their object, we are now within two day's easy march of Philadelphia, and can be there in time, I trust, to make every necessary disposition for opposing them.—On the other hand, if general Howe, by this expedition to sea, only means a deep feint, and should turn his attention against the North-river, we can from hence reinforce general Putnam's army more expeditiously than if we were farther advanced.

The importance of my receiving the earliest intelligence of the
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the fleet's arrival is apparent ; and Congress, I am certain, will direct proper measures for obtaining it, and also for transmitting it to me in the most speedy manner. If authentic advice should be had of the fleet's coming into the Delaware, at the same time it is communicated to me it will be proper that an express should be sent to Lord Stirling or commanding officer at Trenton, to advance with all the troops from thence. Should this not be done, the marching of the troops there will be considerably delayed.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Coryel's, July 31, ten o'clock, A. M.

I am this moment honored with yours of five o'clock this morning, and have accordingly set the army in motion. One division had crossed the Delaware the day before yesterday ; and I am in hopes the whole of the troops now here will be able to reach Philadelphia to-morrow evening.—Lord Stirling's division lies just in my rear, and will move on with us.—I propose setting off for your city as soon as I can get the chief part of the army over.

I am with the greatest respect, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Philadelphia, August 3, 1777.

YOUR favor of this date, with its enclosures, is now before me.—At the same time that I express my thanks for the high mark of confidence which Congress have been pleased to repose in me by their resolve authorising me to send an officer to command the northern army, I should wish to be excused from making the appointment. For this, many reasons might be mentioned, which, I am persuaded, will occur to Congress upon reflection.—The northern department, in a great measure, has been considered as separate, and more particularly under their direction ; and the officers commanding there, always of their nomination. I have never interfered further than merely to advise, and to give such aids as were in my power, on the requisitions of those officers.—The present situation of that department is delicate and critical, and the choice of an officer to command may involve very interesting and important consequences.

It is certainly necessary that a body of militia should be immediately.

mediately called out to reinforce the northern army. In the conference which your committee honored me with yesterday evening, I mentioned the number which I thought sufficient: but my opinion on this point, and the apportioning them to the different states, I wish to submit to Congress, who can best determine the quotas that should come from each.—I would only observe, that Connecticut and New-York are already, and may be again, called on to afford succours to the army at Peekskill.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Camp near Germantown, August 6, 1777.

I BEG to be informed whether Congress have written or mean to write, themselves, to generals Schuyler and St. Clair to repair to head-quarters, or whether they expect me to do it. My reason for this is, the resolves for their recall (transmitted in your favor of the second instant) do not mention how the same should be communicated.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Camp near Germantown, August 7, 1777.

YESTERDAY evening I received a letter from general Schuyler, of the first instant, a copy of which, and of its inclosures, I do myself the honor of transmitting you. By these you will perceive that our affairs at the northward have experienced no change for the better;—on the contrary, that they are in a more unpromising train.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Camp near Germantown, August 9, 1777.

INCLOSED you will be pleased to receive copies of two letters and other papers, which just now came to hand by different expresses.—General Heath's letter of the second instant seems to make the intelligence respecting the fleet, which he had obtained before, vague, if not entirely ill-founded.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

Camp

SIR, *Camp near Germantown, August 9, 1777.*

I HAVE been duly honored with your letter of yesterday, and with its inclosures. — I shall pay attention to the resolves transmitted; and, as soon as circumstances admit, shall propose to general Howe an exchange between lieutenant-colonel Campbell and the Hessian field-officers, and a like number of ours, of equal rank, in his hands.

I would beg leave to lay before Congress a copy of a report made by a board of general officers, held on the seventh instant, to consult of several matters respecting the army. In the course of their deliberation they took into consideration the subject reported. — I shall only add that this matter has been long complained of by the officers, and more so as the indulgence they pray could not nor can be ever attended with the least possible injury to the public, and is what I believe is allowed in most armies. — Congress, I am persuaded, will give it their attention, — and, if no good objections of a public nature appear against the measure, will grant what the officers wish and the board have recommended.

I perceive by the resolves of the thirtieth ultimo and first instant, for recalling generals Schuyler and St. Clair, that they are directed to repair to head-quarters. I also find that a committee had been resolved on, to digest a mode for enquiring into the reasons for evacuating Ticonderoga and Mount-Independence, and into the conduct of the general officers of the northern department at the time of the evacuation. — As these gentlemen have received the letter upon this subject by this time, and will probably be down in the course of a few days, I shall be glad to be informed what to do with them when they arrive. I may then be at a great distance from this, — and, in such case, should be at a loss what to say, or how to conduct myself respecting them, without receiving some directions, which I request to be favored with by the earliest opportunity.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

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*Head-Quarters, Camp near Germantown, August *, 1777.*

SIR,

THE disappearance of the enemy's fleet for so many days rendering it rather improbable that they will again return, I have

* *Probably August 9.*

have thought it advisable to remove the army back to Coryel's, where it will be near enough to succour Philadelphia, should the enemy, contrary to appearances, still make that the object of their next operation; and will be so much the more conveniently situated to proceed to the northward, should the event of the present ambiguous and perplexing situation of things call them that way. I was the more inclined to this step, as the nearness of the army to the city,—besides other disadvantages, afforded a temptation both to officers and men, to indulge themselves in licences inconsistent with discipline and order, and consequently of an injurious tendency.

But before my departure I esteem it my duty to communicate to Congress the result of my examination into the nature of the river-defence proper to be adopted, according to the means in our possession, to prevent the success of any attempt upon Philadelphia by water. I therefore beg leave to lay before Congress what appears to me most eligible, considering all circumstances, and comparing my own observations with the different opinions of the gentlemen whom I consulted on the occasion.

It is generally a well-founded maxim, that we ought to endeavour to reduce our defence as much as possible to a certainty by collecting our strength and making all the preparations at one point, rather than to risk its being weak and ineffectual every where, by dividing our force and attention to different objects:—in doing this we may disable ourselves from acting with sufficient vigor any where, and a misfortune in one place may pave the way for a similar one in another. In our circumstances we have neither men, cannon, nor any thing else to spare, and perhaps cannot with propriety hazard them on objects, which being attended with the greatest success we can promise ourselves, can be productive of only partial and indecisive advantages, and which may possibly fail of the end proposed,—may have some serious ill consequences,—and must at all events have some disadvantages.

It is then to be considered where our defence can be most effectually made,—whether at Billingsport or at Fort-Island.—It appears to me that the last deserves greatly the preference: Billingsport has but one row of chevaux-de-frise: Fort-Island has three, and, in addition to them, a boom, and another chevaux-de-frise ready to be sunk in the channel on the approach of the enemy: of course the obstructions, in this respect, are four times as great at the one as at the other. The galleys and floating batteries that could be brought for the defence of the chevaux-de-frise at Billingsport would be unable to maintain

their station when once the enemy were in possession of the commanding ground on the Jersey side, to which they would be entirely exposed; and, notwithstanding the works raising there,—even supposing them complete,—the strongest advocates for making our defence in this place do not pretend that the event can be protracted more than fifteen or twenty days at most; at the end of which time, we should be obliged, with the loss of our cannon at least, to abandon the defence, and leave it in the power of the enemy to remove or destroy the chevaux-de-frise at pleasure.

Nor is it by any means certain that a single row of chevaux-de-frise would be an impenetrable barrier to the enemy's ships:—experiments have been made, that lead to a contrary supposition; and if they should hazard one (which it might be well worth their while to do with their less valuable ships) under favor of a leading breeze and tide, and should succeed in it,—the consequence might be the loss of our gallies and floating batteries, which I apprehend might be intercepted, and (with the assistance of their gallies and small armed vessels) taken: and this would greatly weaken the opposition we might otherwise give at Fort-Island, and tend powerfully to render it abortive.

But if they should not attempt this, contenting themselves with safer though slower operations, I have already observed that it is agreed on all hands, in fifteen or twenty days they would be able to possess themselves of infallible means of frustrating our opposition there by the capture of our works. And if we add to this that it might very possibly happen in less time,—if from no other cause, yet from the garrison being intimidated by a consciousness of its own inferiority and inability to support itself against a so much superior force of numbers, which might occasion a conduct destructive to itself,—there will remain no sufficient reasons to justify the making of this the principal point of defence.

At Fort-Island, the boom and chevaux-de-frise are an ample security against any forcible impression of the enemy's ships, which it would be imprudent for them to attempt.—On the Jersey side, the situation of the ground is such, that the gallies, floating batteries, and forts, employed in the defence of the obstructions, would have little to fear from any batteries, erected there. Red-bank seems by its elevation to be the only advantageous spot for annoying them: but as it is computed to be above nineteen hundred yards from Fort-Island, the distance is rather too great to allow any battery raised there to act with
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such effect as to be able to silence our fire.—On this side, the ground, by dikes and sluices, may be laid under water to so considerable an extent as to leave no danger of our river force being annoyed from thence; for which purpose suitable preparations ought at once to be made, against it be necessary to carry them in effect.

But though a battery upon Red-bank would not, in my apprehension, be able to prevent the efficacy of our defence, or give any material disturbance to Fort-Island in particular, yet it might serve to make the situation of some of our gallies rather uneasy; and this perhaps makes it worth while to pre-occupy it in order to keep it out of the enemy's hands, erecting a small but strong work there, capable of containing about two hundred men, with six or eight pieces of light cannon and a proportionable quantity of stores. As the approaches to it are difficult on account of the adjacent creeks, and a communication can be kept open between it and our army,—by which means the garrison might receive succours from time to time,—though we could not expect to make it impregnable, yet we should have a prospect of holding it much longer than we could the works at Billingsport. In the position, which, from my present view of it, I should think it best for our army to take, the left wing of it would be nearly opposite to Red-bank, and therefore in a condition to relieve and support it;—whereas Billingsport being more remote from the probable position of the army, and detached from any other work, could not easily derive any assistance from without, and must rely wholly upon its own strength.

Either at Billingsport or at Fort-Island, I believe there is not much to be apprehended from the fire of the enemy's ships unaided by land batteries: for, as by the information of those who ought to be acquainted with the fact, not more than three ships can act a-breast at a time at either place,—and as the gallies, not requiring the same depth of water, can extend themselves at pleasure, and besides carry a superior weight of metal to that which frigates commonly have,—a much superior fire could be opposed to them than any they could bring, and (from the difference of size and make between the frigates and gallies) to much better effect than theirs. The comparative extent of the river at Billingsport and at Fort-Island has been assigned as a motive preferable to the former,—the river being narrower there than at the latter, and supposed to admit of fewer ships operating at a time: but as it is asserted by the gentlemen in the river department, that the sand-banks and shallowness of the
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the river in most places near Fort-Island compensate for the width of it, and make it impossible for more than three ships to act together at a time,—this reason for preferring the position at Billingsport seems to have no foundation. And if we consider that our whole force of galleys and floating batteries would be collected at Fort-Island, assisted by the fort itself,—and that it would not be safe to trust them all out for the defence of Billingsport for fear of the disaster already suggested,—it seems evident enough that this is the place where our defence may be most successfully made.

One of the most weighty considerations with me is that our army, as before intimated, could more conveniently co-operate with the defence by water here than at Billingsport. The ground on this side is better situated here than at the other place: and the army being so much nearer the city, it is so much the less likely that the enemy should be able, by a circuitous route, to fall into the rear of it, and separate it from the city,—which is a circumstance that ought carefully to be attended to.

Some gentlemen are of opinion that our principal dependence ought to be upon Fort-Island and its appendages; but at the same time, that we should make a part of our defence at Billingsport,—proposing, for that purpose, that the works there should be continued on the new contracted scale, to be garrisoned by four or five hundred men. The reasons for this are, that it would serve to delay the enemy, and give our army time to come up, should it be at any distance,—and that it would prevent those disagreeable impressions which never fail to accompany the abandoning works that have been once raised, and plans that have been once in execution, especially when the persons concerned in the defence of them repose a degree of confidence in them,—which is said to be the case in the present instance.

But these reasons may perhaps not be so conclusive as it is imagined: for it is a question, whether, if our army was so remote as to make such a delay necessary, the enemy would embarrass themselves with removing the water obstructions in the first place, but would not rather debark and make a rapid march by land, possessing themselves of the city, and of those positions which would make the surrender of the galleys, &c. in some sort a natural consequence. And it is worthy of consideration whether the abandoning the works begun at this time, which will probably allow some leisure for any disagreeable impressions it might make to be effaced, will not be less injurious than the

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abandoning them hereafter when they have cost more expence, time, and labor, and in the critical moment of an attack, when every misfortune, and the loss of the most inconsiderable post, is too apt to have a much worse influence on the mind, than the real importance of it will justify.

Add to this the possibility that the garrison, dismayed at the approach of numbers so superior to their own, might not answer the end expected from them, and might even be lost by their timidity;—the certainty of losing the cannon after the time limited for the defence, and thereby weakening that of the upper position;—the chance of losing the gallies and floating batteries requisite for covering the chevaux-de-frise, by a hazardous and successful attempt to break through them,—and the garrison with them, which would fall of course upon such an event.—It is however submitted to Congress to balance the advantages and disadvantages, and determine accordingly. I would only beg leave to give it clearly as my opinion that our principal dependence ought to be upon Fort-Island and the obstructions there, and that Billingsport ought not by any means to be defended more than as a secondary object: and, to that end, I would recommend that the works on Fort-Island, which, on their present construction, are by no means calculated for the defence of the chevaux-de-frise,—be immediately altered and adapted to that purpose, taking care at the same time to make them defensible with a small number of men against any sudden attempt to land in boats and carry them by assault.

But, whatever scheme is pursued, I could wish the greatest diligence and dispatch may be used in bringing it to maturity: for, though the danger which lately threatened seems to have subsided, there is no knowing how soon it may return: and certainly it will be prudent to do every thing in our power to be prepared for it, as we can lose nothing by being so, and may lose a great deal by neglecting to improve the interval of leisure they have given us, should it be their intention to revisit this quarter. As the means to this, it will be necessary to furnish Mr. Coudray, to whom the superintendency of those works is intrusted, with a competent number of workmen, tools, and what other things he may want, to enable him to carry them on with propriety, ease, and expedition.

On the whole, I am of opinion that the obstructions in the river, with the help of gallies, floating batteries, and with tolerable industry to put the land works in a proper state, will be extremely formidable to the enemy, and authorise a reasonable expecta-

expectation of their being effectual. The fire-ships also will contribute to this end: for though there are many obstacles to render their success precarious, and a happy concurrence of circumstances is necessary towards it,—any of which failing may disappoint the project,—and there is therefore no room to be sanguine, yet there is some probability of its succeeding; and they will be at least an embarrassment and terror to the enemy, and will oblige them to use precautions inconvenient to them, and serviceable to us.

As an accurate knowledge of the country is essential to a good defence,—and as the enemy's approach may be sudden, and we may be called to act, without having time, when it happens, to examine it sufficiently if it is not done beforehand, it would answer a valuable purpose to have it immediately carefully reconnoitred, and sketches taken of all the landing-places, great roads, and by-paths, encamping grounds, heights, rivers, creeks, morasses, and every thing that it can be of any importance to know. Marcus-Hook seems to be the most advanced place at which it is conjectured the enemy will land: the survey should therefore comprehend all the country between that and Philadelphia. Monsieur Du Coudray has offered his service, with his engineers, to do this business, if authorised by Congress, only requiring that they may be supplied with horses and a hand or two. If Congress approve of it, I shall be glad they may be desired to enter upon it without loss of time.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Sunday evening, 9 o'clock.*

I THIS minute received your favor of this afternoon, transmitting intelligence that a fleet was seen off Sinapuxent on the seventh instant. I was about three miles eastward of the Billet tavern, on the road leading to Coryel's ferry, when the express arrived.—The troops are encamped near the road, where they will remain till I have further accounts respecting the fleet, which you will be pleased to forward to me by the earliest conveyance after they come to hand.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

* *August 10.*

Head-

Head-Quarters, Camp at Cross-Roads, August 12, 1777.

SIR,

GENERAL Newcomb having informed me that he had collected a body of about five hundred Jersey militia at Woodbury, I have desired him to endeavor to keep them together while matters remain in their present uncertainty and suspense, and to employ them in whatever works may be carrying on at Billingsport or Red-bank for the defence of the river. I mention this, that, if it shall be thought proper, monsieur De Coudray may be directed to call for the assistance of those militia accordingly.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

Head-Quarters, Camp at Cross-Roads, August 15, 1777.

SIR,

MONSIEUR Du Coudray has laid before me a plan of the river, by which it appears that, for a considerable space between the two sand-banks on the east side of Fort-Island, there is from four to four and a half fathoms depth of water. According to this representation, there would be room for three frigates to lie between those banks in such a position as to enfilade the works at Fort-Island, and make it difficult to maintain them.

There are but two ways of remedying this inconvenience;—one by having a sufficient number of chevaux-de-frise sunk at the entrance between the two banks;—and the other by having the left flank of Fort-Island fortification supported by a good battery capable of resisting the cannon of the ships, and obliging them to quit their station. The first is evidently preferable, because the efficacy of it will be more certain. A few chevaux-de-frise properly placed might effectually bar all access to the ships: but there is a possibility that any battery we can construct might be overpowered by the fire of the shipping: and as we have few cannon, and Fort-Island is itself a marshy spot, incapable of affording earth for the batteries necessary to be raised upon it, which must be brought from the opposite shore,—it would not be prudent to multiply works there more than cannot be avoided. It would also be a great advantage gained, to secure the island from annoyance except in one point, and

and that in front, from only three ships at a time,—which would be effected by stopping up the passage between the two banks with the chevaux-de-frise. I should therefore think it of importance to have this measure immediately adopted and carried into execution.

With great respect, I have the honor to be, &c. G. W.

SIR,

Neshaminy Camp, August 16, 1777.

I DO myself the honor of addressing a few lines to Congress on a subject which appears to me of infinite importance, and to have a claim in their serious attention. The matter I allude to is the exorbitant price exacted by merchants and vendors of good for every necessary they dispose of. I am sensible the trouble and risk in importing give the adventurers a right to a generous price, and that such, from motives of policy, should be paid: but yet I cannot conceive that they, in direct violation of every principle of generosity, of reason, and of justice, should be allowed (if it is possible to restrain them) to avail themselves of the difficulties of the times, and to amass fortunes upon the public ruin.

This grievance is now an object of universal complaint, and of universal apprehension: and the consequences that are likely to result from a continuance of it excite in every well-affected mind the most disagreeable feelings. The inclosed copy of a memorial from a part of the Pennsylvania officers shews their sentiments upon the subject; and I am persuaded those of the whole army are similar, as they have and do experience the gross abuses they complain of. I know that ways and means, for preventing this evil wholly, are difficult (if impracticable) to find out: but I should hope that Congress themselves, or the supreme powers in the respective states, through their recommendation, may devise some mode by which it may be redressed in part.

I think there are two measures, which, if adopted and put under proper regulations, would be of considerable saving to the public, and to the army, at the same time that they would contribute a good deal to do away part of the uneasiness of the latter, arising from the enormous prices they are compelled to pay for necessities. The first is the establishment of public tanneries in three or four of the states, under care of a judicious commissary or director, to which all hides of the cattle killed for the army should be carried, and tanned. There should be also

also deputies to attend the army to collect the hides: and it appears to me that establishing the tanneries in different states,—for instance one in this, and another in Connecticut,—will be much more advisable than fixing only one in either of them; as the business may be carried on more extensively, with more convenience, and at less expense, than if the raw hides were to be transported to one place only, from which probably there would be a necessity of carrying them the whole distance back again after they were dressed.—This subject was under consideration of Congress once before, and a commissary (if I recollect, a Mr. Phillips) appointed, who declined the office. Leather is of such essential use, and so indispensably necessary for shoes and other purposes in the army, that too much care nor too effectual means cannot be taken to procure it:

What I have ventured to mention, if gone into, will add much to our supplies, and, I am certain, will prevent the high and unjustifiable prices demanded for this article when in the hands of private owners. Besides, at those tanneries, a number of artists, such as shoe and harness makers, might be employed to work the leather up.

In like manner, since our imports of spirit have become so precarious, nay impracticable, on account of the enemy's fleet which infests our whole coast,—I would beg leave to suggest the propriety of erecting public distilleries in different states.—The benefits arising from the moderate use of strong liquor have been experienced in all armies, and are not to be disputed.—In the present situation of affairs, our soldiery cannot obtain such supplies as are absolutely necessary; and if they are fortunate enough to get any, it is from the cutlers at most extravagant rates, and at such as are incredible to tell of. This is a source of much complaint, and, I should hope, may be removed by appointing proper persons to buy grain and distil it for the army,—large quantities of which may be easily procured, and on reasonable terms, in many of the states.

In respect to the observation in the memorial about rations, it is certain the present allowed value is by no means sufficient; nor does it answer the purpose intended. Since that was fixed, provisions, like every other article, though not from the same causes, have become extremely dear; and what at that time was a just equivalent, is totally inadequate now. This matter, I doubt not, will have the attention of Congress, and such regulations be made respecting it, as may be right and equitable.

It appears to me from the information I have received, that two companies—each to consist of sixty men at least—under proper officers, of unsuspected attachment, spirit and activity,—should be immediately raised, to guard the laboratory and stores at Carlisle. Their security is of considerable importance, and ought to be attended to. These companies, besides serving as a guard, will be frequently of use as escorts and convoys to stores.—If Congress should deem them necessary, and order them to be enlisted, yet I would recommend that they should not be raised as merely stationary or local,—having found from experience that regiments or companies formed upon such a footing enter upon other services with great discontent and reluctance, though the occasion should be never so pressing.

In a letter of the thirteenth of June, I submitted to Congress an application from the officers of cavalry respecting their horses,—whether they were to be provided at their own or the public expense. I also laid before them, in a letter of the fifth of July, captain Sullivan's requisition for pay.—I shall be glad to be honored with their determination upon these subjects, and also in general respecting the line of conduct I should pursue as to the pay of officers taken prisoners at any time before the close of the last campaign, who have been permitted to be on parole;—and whether there is to be any distinction between such of them as are continued by new appointments, and those who are not. I have frequent applications in these instances, and wish to know how to act.

Since the express from general Schuyler left this, I received a letter from governor Clinton, a copy of which, and of its inclosures, I herewith transmit, as they give a much more favorable account of the affair at Fort-Schuyler, than was contained in his letter.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Neshaminy Camp, August 17, 1777.

THE unfavorable situation of our affairs in the northern department, and the pressing applications of general Schuyler for aid, induced me to write some time ago to general Putnam to hold Vancortlandt and Livingston's regiments in readiness to embark for Albany, in case I should find it necessary, and the succours he received of militia would justify the measure. I have the honor to acquaint you, that, by a letter from him,
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of the sixteenth, which came to hand yesterday, he informed me, that, without waiting for further directions, he had ordered them to proceed with all possible expedition, as the late advices from that quarter seemed to make a further augmentation of the army requisite.

Besides these, I have, contrary to my wishes, but from the necessity of the case, ordered colonel Morgan to march immediately with his corps as an additional support. I hope they will be of material service, particularly in opposing the savage part of general Burgoyne's force, which, from every account, spreads a general alarm among the inhabitants, and affects the minds of the militia not a little, who have not been much accustomed to their mode of warfare.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

Head-Quarters, Camp at Cross-Roads, August 17, 1777.

SIR,

COLONEL Portail, for himself and in behalf of the gentlemen with him, has made different applications to me for horses and servants; and I have been in a manner under the necessity of furnishing them by way of loan, till they can be otherwise provided. They expect these things to be found them at the public expense; and inform me that the matter is now before Congress, whose determination they look for every moment. I have taken the liberty to mention this, because I should be glad, if any thing of the kind is intended, that it might be done as soon as convenient; or, if it is not, that they may be informed their expectations are not well founded. This will put them upon providing for themselves, and prevent their repeating their applications to me on a subject which I am not authorised to do any thing in.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Neshaminy Camp, August 18, 1777.

I LAST night had the honor of your favor of the seventeenth, with its inclosures. You will perceive by my letter of yesterday, transmitted by favor of the marquis De la Fayette, that I had been so happy as to anticipate the views of Congress by

by ordering colonel Morgan to march with his corps to the northern army.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Camp, Bucks County, August 20, 1777.

I DO myself the honor to forward you a packet which just came to hand from general Schuyler. In his letter to me he communicates an agreeable account of the face of affairs at Fort-Schuyler: I therefore do myself the pleasure of inclosing you an extract.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Camp at Nesbamingy, August 21, 1777.

SINCE I wrote to you on the twelfth instant on the subject of the militia under the command of general Newcomb, I have received another letter from him, which you have inclosed.—By this it appears that the men were not employed in any way while they were at Red-bank, and that they are now anxious to get home to their farms, as they see no immediate occasion for their services. As I had in some measure put them under the direction of monsieur Du Coudray, I did not chuse to give them a discharge without consulting you, though in my opinion they had better be suffered to go home than be kept discontented, as they will turn out with more spirit when they are wanted again. The bearer waits upon you for your determination.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, Bucks County, August 21, 1777.

I DO myself the honor to inclose you a copy of doctor Franklin's letter in favor of count Pulaski, of Poland, by whom this will be handed to you. I some time ago had a letter from Mr. Deane, couched in terms equally favorable to the character and military abilities of this gentleman.—How he can with propriety be provided for, you will be best able to determine.—He takes this from me as an introductory letter, at his own request.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

Nesbamingy

SIR,

Neshaminy Camp, August 21, 1777.

FROM the time which has elapsed since general Howe departed from the capes of Delaware, there is the strongest reason to conclude that he is gone either to the eastward or southward, and with a design to execute some determined plan. The danger of the sea,—the injury his troops must sustain from being so long confined,—the loss of time, so late in the campaign,—will scarcely admit a supposition that he is merely making a feint, and still intends to return either to the Delaware or the North-river without performing some enterprize first in another quarter. The probability is in favour of a southern expedition, because he has been seen, since his departure from the capes, off Sinapuxent, steering a southern course,—and because, had his destination been to the eastward, his arrival there, from the general state of the winds, must have announced it before this, or his fleet would have been discovered by some of the cruisers on that coast.

If he is gone to the southward, he must be gone far that way: for, had Chesapeak-bay been his object, he would have been there long since, and the fact well established. Beyond that, there is no place short of Charleston, of sufficient importance to engage his attention. The extensive commerce, the vast accumulation of military and other stores in that town and its dependencies, with the eclat it would give his arms if he should unfortunately take it, afford him stronger inducements to direct his operations there, than he could possibly have elsewhere.

Matters being thus circumstanced, an important question arises,—how this army is to be employed? If his intentions are such as I have supposed them, it appears to me that an attempt to follow him would not only be fruitless, but would be attended with the most ruinous consequences. The distance is so immense that general Howe might accomplish every purpose he had in view, before we could possibly arrive to oppose him; and so long a march through an unhealthy climate at this season would debilitate and waste a principal part of our force. Added to this, after we had made a considerable progress, he might easily reembark his troops and turn his arms against Philadelphia or elsewhere, as he should think proper, without our being in a condition to give the least aid.

As these, and many other reasons which will readily occur to Congress, will shew the impracticability of our counteracting general Howe in that quarter with any good effect, we have no other alternative left than to remain here idle and inactive, on the

the remote probability of his returning this way,—or to proceed towards Hudson's-river, with a view of opposing general Burgoyne, or making an attempt on York-Island, as the situation of affairs shall point out. A successful stroke with respect to either would be attended with the most signal advantages, and would be the best compensation we could make for any losses we may sustain to the southward. Besides these considerations,—if, after all our conjectures and reasonings upon the subject, general Howe should be gone to the eastward to co-operate with Mr. Burgoyne, the army will be, by the movement proposed, so far on its way to prevent, I hope, the success of his enterprise.

The above reasons led me to call a council of general officers this morning, to take the subject of removing the troops from hence into consideration: and I am happy to inform Congress they were in sentiment with me upon the occasion, as they will perceive by a copy of the proceedings then had, which I do myself the honor of laying before them. Nevertheless, as it is a movement which may involve the most important consequences, I have thought proper to submit it to Congress for their deliberation and decision. If it is deemed expedient, we have perhaps not a moment to lose in carrying it into execution; and, under this persuasion, I have sent colonel Hamilton, one of my aides, (who will have the honor of delivering this) to bring me the result of their opinion.

As the northern department has been all along considered separate, and in some measure distinct, and there are special resolves vesting the command in particular persons.—in case it should hereafter appear eligible to unite the two armies, it may perhaps be necessary that Congress should place the matter upon such a footing as to remove all scruples or difficulties about the command, that could possibly arise on my arrival there.—This I request, from a disposition to harmony, and from my knowing the ill and fatal consequences that have often arisen from such controversies, and not from the most distant apprehension that one would take place upon such an event. The thing however is possible, and to guard against it can do injury. I have the honor to be, &c. G. W.

P. S. That I may not appear inconsistent, to advise, and to act before I obtain an opinion,—I beg leave to mention that I shall move the army to the Delaware to-morrow morning, to change their ground at any rate, as their present encampment begins to be disagreeable, and would injure their health in a short time. Our forage also begins to grow scarce here.

Nesbamin

SIR,

Neshaminy Camp, August 21, 1777.

I AM this moment honored with yours of this morning, containing several pieces of intelligence of the fleet's having been seen off the capes of Virginia on the fifteenth instant.—I shall, in consequence of this information, halt upon my present ground till I hear something further.

Colonel Pinckney of South-Carolina paid me a visit two days ago. He informed me that the military stores in Charleston and the neighborhood were immense, and that he did not believe that the governor or commanding officer there had had the least intimation of the fleet's having stood to the southward; and he seemed very apprehensive, that, if Charleston was their object, they would find them lulled into security, and quite unprepared for an attack.—As I cannot yet think that general Howe seriously intends to go into Chesapeak, I would by all means advise that an express be immediately dispatched (if one has not already gone) to warn them of their danger, to let them prepare in the best manner for defence, and to advise them to remove all supernumerary stores.

I shall immediately call upon governor Livingston to furnish the number of militia from the state of Jersey, demanded by requisition of Congress, to garrison the forts in the Highlands, while the New-York militia march to reinforce the northern army.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

Head-Quarters, Camp at Cross-Roads, August 22, 1777.

SIR,

I AM honored with your favor containing the intelligence of the enemy's arrival in Chesapeak-bay, and the resolution of Congress thereupon.—I have, in consequence of this account, sent orders to general Nash immediately to embark his brigade and colonel Proctor's corps of artillery, if vessels can be procured for the purpose, and to proceed to Chester,—or, if vessels cannot be provided, to hasten towards that place by land with all the dispatch he can. I have also directed general Sullivan to join this army with his division as speedily as possible, and I have issued orders for all the troops here to be in motion to-morrow morning very early, with intention to march them towards Philadelphia, and onwards.

I am happy to find Congress have ordered the removal of the
stores

stores from Lancaster and York, to places of greater safety, which is, without doubt, a very proper and necessary measure. With much respect and esteem, I have the honor to be, sir, your most obedient servant, G. W.

SIR,

August 23, 1777.

I BEG leave to inform you that the army marched early this morning, and will encamp, I expect, this evening, within five or six miles of Philadelphia. To-morrow morning it will move again, and I think to march it through the city, but without halting. I am induced to do this, from the opinion of several of my officers and many friends in Philadelphia, that it may have some influence on the minds of the disaffected there, and those who are dupes to their artifices and opinions. The march will be down Front and up Chestnut-street, and, I presume, about seven o'clock.

Notwithstanding the arrival of the enemy's fleet in Chesapeake-bay, and the seeming probability that general Howe will debark his troops and attempt something, yet I would take the liberty to mention that I think the several works for the defence of the city should be carried on with the usual industry, and that no pains should be omitted to complete them. I would also advise that the same look-outs for intelligence should be continued at the capes, and the earliest information communicated of any thing material: for, though the fleet is in Chesapeake-bay, the enemy may push in a number of vessels with troops, and make an effort to effect some stroke against Philadelphia by surprise. Such an event does not seem probable while they have a larger shew of force in a neighboring state: but it will be prudent to guard against it.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Chester, August 25, 1777, eight o'clock.

I LAST night had the honor of your favor of the twenty-fourth, with its inclosures.—No letters came for you from general Schuyler; and therefore, agreeable to your request, I transmit you a copy of one I received from him, and of the material papers which it covered. Among the copies, you will find general Burgoyne's instructions at large to lieutenant-colonel Baum, pointing out the objects of his command when he was

was first detached. What we had before, was after he marched, and was an answer to a report he had received from him.—There was also a mistake in his name before, being called Bem in the copies sent by general Lincoln.

I shall be happy if the account respecting Staten-Island should prove true :—I hope it will.

Two divisions of the army moved this morning, and will proceed after a short halt near this place to refresh themselves: the remainder will continue on their ground to-day, in order to rest and recover from the fatigue of the march yesterday and the day before. After breakfast I intend to set out for Wilmington with the light horse, to reconnoitre the country, and to obtain the best information I can respecting the enemy.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR, *Wilmington, August 25, 1777, six o'clock, P. M.*

THE inclosed intelligence has just come to my hands. General Greene's and general Stephen's divisions are within a few miles of this place. I shall order them to march immediately here. The two other divisions halted this day at Derby to refresh themselves; but they will come on as expeditiously as possible. There are about five hundred Pennsylvania militia at Chester and Marcus-Hook, that are armed: there are a number more unarmed.—I have ordered all the armed immediately down. I do not know what number of the militia of this state are yet collected: but I am told they turn out with great alacrity.

There are a quantity of public and private stores at the Head-of-Elk, which I am afraid will fall into the enemy's hands if they advance quickly: among others, there is a considerable parcel of salt.—Every attempt will be made to save that. When I get my force collected, I shall dispose of it in the best manner in my power. To this end, I purpose to view the grounds towards the enemy in the morning: I am yet a stranger to them.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Wilmington, August 27, 1777.

I THIS morning returned from the Head-of-Elk, which I left last night. In respect to the enemy, I have nothing new

to communicate :—they remain where they debarked first. I could not find out from enquiry what number is landed, nor form an estimate of it from the distant view I had of their encampment. But few tents were to be seen from Iron-hill and Gray's-hill, which are the only eminences about Elk. I am happy to inform you that all the public stores are removed from thence, except about seven thousand bushels of corn. This I urged the commissary to get off as soon as possible, and hope it will be effected in a few days, if the enemy should not prevent, which their situation gives them but too easy an opportunity of doing. The scarcity of teams in proportion to the demand will render the removal rather tedious, though I have directed the quarter-master to send some from hence to expedite the measure.

A part of the Delaware militia are stationed there; and about nine hundred more from Pennsylvania are now on the march that way. I also intended to move part of the army that way to-day, but am under the necessity of deferring it till their arms are put in order, and they are supplied with ammunition, both having been greatly injured by the heavy rains that fell yesterday and last night.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, Wilmington, August 28, 1777.

HAVING endeavored, at the solicitation of the count De Pulaski, to think of some mode for employing him in our service, there is none occurs to me, liable to so few inconveniences and exceptions as the giving him the command of the horse. This department is still without a head, as I have not, in the present deficiency of brigadiers with the army, thought it advisable to take one from the foot for that command. The nature of the horse service with us being such that they commonly act in detachments, a general officer with them is less necessary than at the head of the brigades of infantry. In the absence of general Smallwood, who is ordered to put himself at the head of the Maryland militia, we shall have two brigades without general officers.

But though the horse will suffer less from the want of a general officer than the foot, a man of real capacity, experience, and knowledge in that service, might be extremely useful. The count appears, by his recommendations, to have sustained no inconsiderable military character in his own country: and as the prin-

principal attention in Poland has been for some time past paid to the cavalry, it is to be presumed this gentleman is not unacquainted with it.—I submit it to Congress how far it may be eligible to confer the appointment I have mentioned upon him: they will be sensible of all the objections attending the measure, without my particularising them, and can determine accordingly.

This gentleman, we are told, has been, like us, engaged in defending the liberty and independence of his country, and has sacrificed his fortune to his zeal for those objects. He derives from hence a title to our respect, that ought to operate in his favor, as far as the good of the service will permit: but it can never be expected we should lose sight of this.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, Wilmington, August 29, 1777.

ON my return to this place last evening from White-Clay creek, I was honored with yours of the twenty-seventh, with sundry resolves of Congress, to which I shall pay due attention.

The enemy advanced a part of their army yesterday to Gray's-Hill about two miles on this side of Elk,—whether with intent to take post there, or to cover while they remove what stores they found in the town, I cannot yet determine.—I do not know what quantity of private property remained: but of the public there were several thousand bushels of corn and oats, which might have been removed also, had not most of the teams in the country been employed by private persons in bringing off very valuable goods.

Our light parties yesterday took between thirty and forty prisoners; twelve deserters from the navy and eight from the army have already come in; but they are able to give us very little intelligence. They generally agree that their troops are healthy, but that their horses suffered very much by the voyage.

By a letter from general Gates which you were pleased to transmit me yesterday, he requests that commissions may be sent to brigadiers Glover, Poor, and Patterson, which I beg the favor of you to do by the return express. The two last lost theirs with their baggage at Ticonderoga, and general Glover had none.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.
Wilmington

SIR, *Wilmington, August 30, 1777.*

SINCE I had the honor of addressing you yesterday, nothing of importance has occurred, and the enemy remain as they then were.—I was reconnoitring the country and different roads all yesterday, and am now setting out on the same business again.

Sensible of the advantages of light troops, I have formed a corps under the command of a brigadier, by draughting a hundred from each brigade, which is to be constantly near the enemy, and to give them every possible annoyance.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

Ten o'clock.—This minute twenty-four British prisoners arrived, taken yesterday by captain Lee of the light-horse.

SIR,

Wilmington, September 1, 1777.

THE latest and most material intelligence which I have obtained respecting the enemy, you will find in the inclosed papers which I do myself the honor of transmitting to you.

How far the enemy have it in view to extend themselves in a line from bay to bay, I cannot determine: but the idea has taken place with many: and it is said to be founded on their hints to some persons, who,—from accident in some instances, and perhaps choice in others,—have had a more familiar intercourse with them. I cannot suppose they have any such design, or, if they have, that it can be more than temporary for procuring supplies of provisions.

General Howe's declaration is agreeable to his constant usage, and is what we might reasonably expect. The only difference is, the present exhibition is styled a '*declaration*.' It is another effort to seduce the people to give up their rights, and to encourage our soldiers to desert. The facts contained in the deposition of Francis Alexander, which you have also inclosed, seem to be opposed to that regularity and discipline which are promised by the declaration.

Yesterday there was some skirmishing between one of our advanced parties and one of the enemy's, in which they were obliged to retreat with the loss of an officer and three men killed, according to report.—We had one private wounded.

I have received no particular accounts respecting the Maryland Eastern-Shore militia: from the best information I have, a great many are well disposed to turn out, but are prevented giving

giving their aid through want of arms.—Apprehending that the militia there would stand in need of an officer to arrange them, I wrote to general Cadwallader, requesting his good offices, which I am told have been exerted.—Colonel Gift is now gone down, and I expect will move on as soon as possible, with such as are armed, towards the enemy.—General Smallwood is gone to take the command of those on the Western-Shore, of whom I hear many are collecting:—but I have no authentic advices on the subject.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

Will it not be advisable to order colonel Richardson's regiment from their present station, to march and join the Eastern-Shore militia?

SIR,

Wilmington, September 1, 1777.

AT half after twelve o'clock I was honored with yours of this morning, with its several inclosures.—I shall make inquiry respecting the workmen in the militia, and will order all to be detached, that can be spared.

The intelligence from the northward is very interesting, and I hope will be succeeded by other fortunate events.—I am sorry general Arnold did not arrive sooner: if he had, it is probable the enemy would have suffered considerably in their retreat.—I flatter myself that we shall have nothing more to apprehend in that quarter this campaign, and that the disgrace and disappointment they have met with will produce a favorable change in the dispositions of the Indians.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

P. S. You will be pleased to send the letter for colonel Hughes by the eastern post to-morrow.

SIR,

Wilmington, Sept. 3, 1777, eight o'clock, P. M.

I THIS minute returned to head-quarters where I found your favor of this date, with the resolves respecting general Sullivan, and colonel Richardson's battalion.—I had conversed with general Sullivan upon the subject, and observed to him that it was necessary an inquiry should be had relative to the affair of Staten-Island, as his conduct was censured, and much dissatisfaction prevailed. He was sensible of the propriety of the measure, and expressed a desire that it should take place, provided

vided he could have the benefit of general Smallwood's testimony, who was on the expedition.—That gentlemen happens at this time to be in Maryland; which must necessarily delay the inquiry, unless some mode can be agreed upon for obtaining his sentiments upon the matter.

This morning the enemy came out with a considerable force and three pieces of artillery, against our light advanced corps, and, after some pretty smart skirmishing, obliged them to retreat,—being far inferior in number, and without cannon.—The loss on either side is not yet ascertained: ours, though not exactly known, is not very considerable: theirs, we have reason to believe, was much greater, as some of our parties, composed of expert marksmen, had opportunities of giving them several close, well-directed fires,—more particularly in one instance, when a body of riflemen formed a kind of ambuscade.—They advanced about two miles this side of Iron-Hill, and then withdrew to that place, leaving a piquet at Couch's mill, about a mile in front. Our parties now lie at White-Clay creek, except the advanced piquets, which are at Christiana bridge.

Our monday a large detachment of the enemy landed at Cecil court-house; and this morning I had advice of their having advanced on the Newcastle road as far as Carson's tavern. Parties of horse were sent out to reconnoitre them, which went three miles beyond the Red-Lion, but could neither see nor hear of them; whence I conjectured they filed off by a road to their left, and fell in with their main body.—The design of their movement this morning seems to have been to disperse our light troops who had been troublesome to them, and to gain possession of Iron-Hill, to establish a post most probably for covering their retreat in case of accidents.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

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SIR,

Head-Quarters, Wilmington, Sept. 5, 1777.

SINCE I did myself the honor of writing to you the night before last, the enemy have remained entirely quiet.—A person who came express from general Rodney informs me that the enemy's shipping fell down from Cecil court-house on tuesday last; but how low, he does not know. I have desired general Rodney to inquire into this matter, and, if it be true, to send persons along the bay shore to see where they lie.—General Maxwell, who is just come up from the lines, confirms the account of the shipping having fallen down Elk: but it is thought
to

to be with a design of going up the other arm of the bay for the convenience of watering near the mouth of Susquehanna.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

P. S. We have not been able to ascertain the enemy's loss in the late action any other way than by a woman who came from their camp yesterday:—she says she saw nine waggon-loads of wounded. I think this probable, because we had about forty killed and wounded; and, as our men were thinly posted, they must have done more damage upon a close body, than they received.

SIR,

Newport, September 7, 1777.

HIS excellency being out reconnoitring, and busily engaged in the affairs of the army, I have the honor to acknowledge his receipt of your letter of the sixth, with the resolutions inclosed, which came to hand yesterday afternoon.

In respect to the militia requested of Jersey, his excellency is doubtful whether they can be obtained: for governor Livingston, by a late letter, informed him that he had no expectation that more than three hundred, of the thousand called for to garrison the posts in the Highlands, would march, notwithstanding he has issued orders for that purpose; and that three weeks would probably elapse before that number went. If the requisition can be complied with, he has no doubt of general Dickinson's exertions, and is satisfied of the propriety of appointing him to the command. This, he imagines, would have followed of course, as he is major-general of all the militia in the state, and has given ample testimony, as well of his capacity as of his firmness and bravery.

By deserters and other intelligence, his excellency was informed last night that the enemy's whole force left Elk yesterday, and advanced on the road towards Christiana. The deserters added that they had disencumbered themselves of all their tents and baggage, and had sent them back and reembarked them. All their ships, except two or three which are ships of war, are said to have fallen down the bay, below the mouth of Sassafras.—We have had no information to-day of any further movements; and I believe their main body lies about Iron-Hill.

I have the honor to be, &c.

R. H. HARRISON.

P. S. The deserters said they had destroyed a good deal of the corn, &c. they found in store.

Eight

SIR, *Eight miles from Wilmington, Sept. 9, 1777.*

THE enemy advanced yesterday with a seeming intention of attacking us upon our post near Newport. We waited for them the whole day; but they halted in the evening at a place called Milltown, about two miles from us.—Upon reconnoitring their situation, it appeared probable that they only meant to amuse us in front, while their real intent was to march by our right, and, by suddenly passing the Brandywine and gaining the heights upon the north side of that river, get between us and Philadelphia, and cut us off from that city. To prevent this, it was judged expedient to change our position immediately: the army accordingly marched at two o'clock this morning, and will take post this evening upon the high grounds near Chad's Ford.—We have heard nothing circumstantial from the enemy this day: when I do, I shall immediately transmit you an account.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR, *Chad's Ford, September 10, 1777.*

YESTERDAY evening I received the honor of your letter of the ninth, with its several inclosures.—I have written to general Putnam to detach the fifteen hundred men mentioned by Congress, and inclose my letter upon the subject, which you will be pleased to forward to him by the earliest opportunity.

In respect to the subject of monsieur Du Coudray's letter, I would beg leave to observe, however eligible the measure might otherwise be which he recommends, an attempt to carry it into execution at this time would answer no valuable purpose, as the work in all probability could not be more than marked out when it would be wanted. I would also add that I do not conceive any great advantages could be derived from it, supposing it could be completed,—as we are certain the enemy will never attack lines which they can avoid. If they were obliged to approach Philadelphia by a particular route, in such case no exertions should be spared to erect works, and the adoption of the plan would be highly expedient.

The enemy are now lying near Kennet's Square, and in a tolerably compact body. They have parties advanced on the Lancaster road, and on those leading over this ford and to Wilmington. Manœuvring appears to be their plan. I hope, notwithstanding—

notwithstanding, that we shall be able to find out their real intended route, and to defeat their purposes.

By light-horsemen this instant come in, the enemy are in motion, and appear to be advancing towards us. His excellency is giving the necessary orders, and getting the troops under arms, which prevents him from signing this himself as was intended at first.

I have the honor to be, &c.

R. H. HARRISON,

One o'clock.—It is said the enemy have halted.

SIR,

Camp at Chad's Ford, September 10, 1777.

YOUR favor of this morning came to hand about two o'clock. His excellency was then out, and still is.—I have nothing material to inform you of respecting the enemy.—By the last advices from our reconnoitring parties, they had halted in a low ground strongly flanked by two hills, about a mile below Welch's tavern. It is supposed they moved from the post they occupied this morning, for want of water.—Some interesting event may take place to-morrow, as they are within a convenient distance to attack, if they have any such intention.

I have the honor to be, &c.

R. H. HARRISON,

Chad's Ford, Sept. 11, 1777, three quarters after 8 o'clock A. M.

SIR,

THE enemy are now advancing. Their present appearance indicates a disposition to pursue this route. If they do, I trust they will meet with a suitable reception, and such as will establish our liberties.—They are now advanced near the Brandwine, and have fired several pieces of artillery.

I have the honor to be, &c.

R. H. HARRISON.

SIR,

Chad's Ford, 5 o'clock P. M. Sept. 11, 1777.

WHEN I had the honor of addressing you this morning, I mentioned that the enemy were advancing, and had begun a cannonade.—I would now beg leave to inform you that they have kept up a brisk fire from their artillery ever since. Their advanced party was attacked by our light troops under general

Maxwell, who crossed the Brandiwine for that purpose, and had posted his men on some high grounds on each side the road. The fire from our people was not of long duration, as the enemy pressed on in force,—but was very severe.

What loss the enemy sustained, cannot be ascertained with precision: but, from our situation, and the briskness of the attack, it is the general opinion, particularly of those who were engaged, that they had at least three hundred men killed and wounded.—Our damage is not exactly known: but, from the best accounts we have been able to obtain, it does not exceed fifty in the whole.

After this affair, the enemy halted upon the heights, where they have remained ever since, except a detachment of them, which filed off about eleven o'clock from their left, and which has since passed Brandiwine at Jones's ford, between five and six miles above Chad's. The amount of it is not known,—the accounts respecting it being various,—some making it two or three thousand strong, and others more.

Generals Sullivan, Stirling, and Stephen, with their divisions, are gone in pursuit, and to attack it if they can with any prospect of success.—There has been a scattering loose fire between our parties on each side the creek since the action in the morning, which just now became warm, when general Maxwell passed over with his corps, and drove them from their ground with the loss of thirty men left dead on the spot (among them a captain of the forty-ninth), and a number of intrenching tools with which they were throwing up a battery.

At half after four o'clock, the enemy attacked general Sullivan at the ford next above this, and the action has been very violent ever since.—It still continues.—A very severe cannonade has begun here too; and I suppose we shall have a very hot evening:—I hope it will be a happy one.

I have the honor to be, in great haste, sir, your most obedient servant.

R. H. HARRISON.

SIR,

Chester, Sept. 11, 1777, twelve o'clock at night.

I AM sorry to inform you, that, in this day's engagement, we have been obliged to leave the enemy masters of the field.—Unfortunately, the intelligence received, of the enemy's advancing up the Brandiwine and crossing at a ford about six miles above us, was uncertain and contradictory, notwithstanding all my pains to get the best. This prevented me making a disposition

sition adequate to the force with which the enemy attacked us on our right; in consequence of which, the troops first engaged were obliged to retire before they could be reinforced. In the midst of the attack on the right, that body of the enemy, which remained on the other side of Chad's ford, crossed it, and attacked the division there under the command of general Wayne, and the light troops under general Maxwell, who, after a severe conflict, also retired.—The militia under the command of general Armstrong being posted at a ford about two miles below Chad's, had no opportunity of engaging.

But, though we fought under many disadvantages, and were, from the causes above mentioned, obliged to retire, yet our loss of men is not, I am persuaded, very considerable,—I believe, much less than enemy's. We have also lost seven or eight pieces of cannon, according to the best information I can at present obtain.—The baggage, having been previously moved off, is all secure, saving the men's blankets, which being at their backs, many of them doubtless are lost.

I have directed all the troops to assemble behind Chester, where they are now arranging for this night.—Notwithstanding the misfortune of the day, I am happy to find the troops in good spirits: and I hope another time we shall compensate for the losses now sustained.

The marquis La Fayette was wounded in the leg, and general Woodford in the hand: divers other officers were wounded, and some slain; but the numbers of either cannot now be ascertained.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

P. S. It has not been in my power to send you earlier intelligence,—the present being the first leisure moment I have had since the action.

SIR, *Head-Quarters, Germantown, September 13, 1777.*

I HAVE been honored with your favor of this date.—I heartily wish the works on Delaware were completed: but I think,—and in this opinion my officers concur,—that the service will be injured if any part of the continental troops were now to be employed about them. If we should be able to oppose general Howe with success in the field, the works will be unnecessary;—if not, and he should force us from hence, he will certainly possess himself of them. But, to prevent his attempting it now, I have directed the meadows on Province-Island

Island to be overflowed immediately, and any other grounds that may be thought necessary for that purpose.—The works have been more peculiarly under the direction of monsieur Du Coudray, and I doubt not he will pay every attention to their completion and security, that the situation of affairs will admit of.

A part of the militia under general Armstrong will be posted along Schuylkill, to throw up redoubts at the different fords, which will be occasionally occupied, whilst I move to the other side with the main body of the army.—This disposition appears to me the most eligible from a consideration of all circumstances, and better than if any part of our present force was to be employed at the forts.—If further reinforcements of the militia should come in, they perhaps may be more properly assigned to that business than any we now have.

Your letter respecting general De Borre just now came to hand: I shall transmit him a copy of it and of the resolution. There can be no court of inquiry into his conduct at this time: as soon as the state of the army will admit, it will be held.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR, *Head-Quarters, near Germantown, Sept. 14, 1777.*

I HAVE the honor of yours this morning, inclosing the copy of a letter from general Dickinson.—In consequence of the interesting information contained in it, I have written to general Putnam, directing him to send forward a second detachment of a thousand men in addition to the former, as you will perceive by perusing the inclosed duplicate of my letter to him which you will be pleased to seal and dispatch as expeditiously as possible, lest the original should by any accident miscarry.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

P. S. You have also copies of other letters, by which you will perceive the measures I am taking, and which you will in like manner be pleased to forward.—On second thoughts, I should be glad you would transmit the inclosures open to general Dickinson, for his perusal and information, and to be forwarded by him.

Buck

SIR, *Buck Tavern, Sept. 15, 1777, three o'clock P. M.*

YOUR favor of yesterday, with its several inclosures, came to hand last night.—Though I would willingly pay every attention to the resolutions of Congress, yet, in the late instance respecting the recall of general Sullivan, I must beg leave to defer giving any order about it, till I hear further from that honorable body.—Our situation at this time is critical and delicate; and nothing should be done to add to its embarrassments. We are now most probably on the point of another action: and to derange the army by withdrawing so many general officers from it, may and must be attended with many disagreeable if not ruinous consequences. Such a proceeding at another time might not produce any bad effects: but how can the army be possibly conducted with a prospect of success, if the general officers are taken off in the moment of battle?—Congress may rely upon it, such a measure will not promote but injure the service.

It is not my wish to prevent or to delay a proper inquiry into general Sullivan's conduct a single instant, when the circumstances of the army will admit: but now they prohibit it, and (I think) the suspension in his command also. The recall of general St. Clair obliged me to part with general Lincoln whom I could but ill spare; so that the whole charge of his division is now upon general Wayne, there being no other brigadier in it than himself.—The Maryland troops, if general Sullivan is taken away, will not have one general officer, general Smallwood being at the head of the militia coming from that state, and general De Borre suspended:—added to this, colonel Gist, who commands one regiment of them, is now from it by order.—In a word, sir, whether the charges alledged against Sullivan are true or false, or whether his conduct has been exceptionable or not, I am satisfied the resolution for his recall at this time was unhappily adopted, and, if carried into execution, will not fail to add new difficulties to our present distresses: and I am obliged to observe, in justice to my own character, that I cannot be answerable for the consequences which may arise from a want of officers to assist me.

It gives me great pleasure to find general Gates is on so respectable a footing; and I hope our affairs in that quarter, in the course of a little time, will be in as prosperous a train as we could reasonably wish.

The main body of the enemy, from the best intelligence I have been able to get, lies near Dilworthtown, not far from the field

field of action, where they have been busily employed in burying their dead, which, from accounts, amounted to a very considerable number.—We are moving up this road to get between the enemy and the Swedes' ford, and to prevent them from turning our right flank, which they seem to have a violent inclination to effect, by all their movements.

I would beg leave to recommend in the most earnest manner, that some board or committee be appointed, or some mode adopted, for obtaining supplies of blankets for the troops:—many are now without; and the season becoming cold, they will be injured in their health, and unfitted for service, unless they are immediately provided with them. Our supplies in this instance, as well as in every article of clothing, cannot be too great, as there are frequent losses not equally to be avoided.—I would also observe that I think, in point of prudence and sound policy, every species of provisions should be removed from the city, except such as will be necessary to supply the present demands of this army. I have been told there are considerable quantities in private hands, which should not be suffered to remain a moment longer than they can be conveyed away.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

*Camp between the Warren and White-Horfe
Taverns, September 16, 1777.*

SIR,

I ARRIVED here last night with the army, and am now so far advanced as to be in a position to meet the enemy on the route to Swedes' Ford if they should direct their course that way.—Their situation, I believe, from the best information I have been able to obtain, is nearly the same as it was yesterday evening when I wrote to you.

I have ordered all the troops to be refreshed this morning, as they were late in getting to their ground last night, and they are now cooking their provision. In the meantime I intend to see my general officers, and to collect their sentiments upon the subject of our next movement and operations.

General Smallwood was at Oxford meeting-house yesterday. He has with him about eleven hundred and fifty rank and file fit for duty: but not more than eight hundred and sixty or seventy are well armed,—some are without any: they want ammunition too and many necessaries. The former I ordered on Sunday.—Colonel Gift is at Christiana with about seven hundred

dred men, who will form a junction with general Smallwood.
I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Yellow-Springs, September 17, 1777.

I HAVE been honored with your two favors of yesterday, and their inclosures, to which due attention shall be paid.

The enemy seem now to be straining every nerve to accomplish their purpose: but I trust, whatever present success they may have, they will, ere long, experience a reverse of fortune.—If they have four thousand men in the Jerseys, it is probable they have something more serious in view than a mere diversion: but I am in hopes, when general M'Dougal comes to unite his force with the militia, general Dickinson will be strong enough effectually to make head against them.

Yesterday the enemy moved from Concord, by the Edgemont towards the Lancaster road, with evident design to gain our right flank. This obliged us to alter our position and march to this place, from whence we intend immediately to proceed to Warwick.—We suffered much from the severe weather yesterday and last night, being unavoidably separated from our tents and baggage,—which not only endangers the health of the men, but has been very injurious to our arms and ammunition. These, when we arrive at Warwick, we shall endeavor, as soon as possible, to put again into a proper condition,—to do which, and to refresh the men, are two principal motives for going there.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Camp near Pott's-Grove, September 23, 1777.

I HAVE not had the honor of addressing you since your adjournment to Lancaster, and I sincerely wish that my first letter was upon a more agreeable subject.—The enemy, by a variety of perplexing manœuvres through a country from which I could not derive the least intelligence (being to a man disaffected), contrived to pass the Schuylkill last night at the Flatland and other fords in the neighborhood of it. They marched immediately towards Philadelphia, and I imagine their advanced parties will be near that city to-night.

They had so far got the start before I received certain intelligence

ligence that any considerable number had crossed, that I found it in vain to think of overtaking their rear, with troops harrassed as ours had been with constant marching since the battle of Brandywine; and therefore concluded, by the advice of all the general officers, to march from this place to-morrow morning towards Philadelphia, and on the way endeavor to form a junction with the continental troops under general M'Dougal from Peekskill, and the Jersey militia under general Dickinson, both of whom are, I hope, on this side the Delaware.—I am also obliged to wait for general Wayne and general Smallwood, who were left upon the other side of Schuylkill, in hopes of falling upon the enemy's rear:—but they have eluded them as well as us.

When I last recrossed the Schuylkill, it was with a firm intent of giving the enemy battle wherever I should meet them, and accordingly advanced as far as the Warren tavern upon the Lancaster road, near which place the two armies were upon the point of coming to a general engagement, but were prevented by a most violent flood of rain, which continued all the day and following night. When it held up, we had the mortification to find that our ammunition, which had been completed to forty rounds a man, was entirely ruined; and in that situation we had nothing left for it but to find out a strong piece of ground which we could easily maintain till we could get the arms put into order, and a recruit of ammunition.

Before this could be fully effected, the enemy marched from their position near the White-horse tavern, down the road leading to the Swedes' Ford.—I immediately crossed the Schuylkill above them, and threw myself full in their front, hoping to meet them in their passage, or soon after they had passed the river.—The day before yesterday they were again in motion, and marched rapidly up the road leading towards Reading.—This induced me to believe that they had two objects in view,—one to get round the right of the army,—the other perhaps to detach parties to Reading where we had considerable quantities of military stores.

To frustrate those intentions, I moved the army up on this side the river to this place, determined to keep pace with them: but early this morning I received intelligence that they had crossed the fords below.—Why I did not follow immediately, I have mentioned in the former part of my letter: but the strongest reason against being able to make a forced march is the want of shoes. Messieurs Carroll, Chase, and Penn, who were

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were some days with the army, can inform Congress in how deplorable a situation the troops are, for want of that necessary article. At least one thousand men are bare-footed, and have performed the marches in that condition. I was told of a great number of shoes in the hands of private people in Philadelphia, and sent down to secure them: but I doubt the approach of the enemy will prevent it.

I have planned a method of throwing a garrison into Fort Mifflin.—If it succeeds, and they, with the assistance of the ships and gallies, should keep the obstructions in the river, general Howe's situation in Philadelphia will not be the most agreeable: for if his supplies can be stopped by water, it may be easily done by land. To do both shall be my utmost endeavor; and I am not yet without hope that the acquisition of Philadelphia may, instead of his good fortune, prove his ruin.

General St. Clair, who has been constantly with the army for some time past, can give you many pieces of information which may have escaped me, and therefore I refer you to him for many particulars.

If there are any shoes and blankets to be had in Lancaster or that part of the country, I earnestly intreat you to have them taken up for the use of the army. I have been informed that there are large parcels of shoes in particular there.

Finding that the inclosed came from colonel Gibson, I took the liberty of opening it, as I wanted much to know what route he was taking.

I have ordered all the Virginia militia who are tolerably armed to come forward and join the army. Those who have no arms are to wait at Fredericktown in Maryland till they hear whether any can be provided for them at Lancaster: you will therefore be pleased to make enquiry what number can be procured there, and send an express to Frederic with orders for as many men to come forward as there are arms.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

Camp, twenty miles from Philadelphia, October 3, 1777.

SIR,

YESTERDAY afternoon I had the honor to receive your favors of the thirtieth ultimo, with their inclosures.—I was much obliged by the accounts from the northern army,

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though in general they had reached me before; and I flatter myself we shall soon hear that they have been succeeded by other fortunate and interesting events, as the two armies, by general Gates's letter, were encamped near each other.

I shall pay due attention to the resolution you refer me to; and no exertions on my part shall be wanting, to collect what necessaries I can for the army. This, I am persuaded, will be equally attended to by the honorable board of war; and I hope, by care and industry, many supplies may be obtained to relieve our distresses, which, in the articles of shoes, stockings, and blankets, are extremely great.

Since my letter of the twenty-ninth, no favorable change has taken place in our affairs:—on the contrary, we have sustained an additional loss in the capture of the Delaware. She fell into the enemy's hands in a day or two after they were in possession of the city, and in a manner not yet well understood.—Some have supposed the crew mutinied,—while another report is, that she was disabled in her rudder by a shot, and drove on shore.—This misfortune takes off the success of captain Biddle's cruise.—I will not dwell longer on the subject.—Congress may rest assured, all the means in my power shall be employed to put our affairs in a more agreeable train, and to accomplish the end they so earnestly wish.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

P. S. Inclosed is a copy of general Howe's proclamation issued the twenty-eighth ultimo.

SIR, *Camp near Pennibacker's Mill, October 5, 1777.*

HAVING received intelligence through two intercepted letters, that general Howe had detached a part of his force for the purpose of reducing Billingsport and the forts on the Delaware, I communicated the accounts to my general officers, who were unanimously of opinion that a favorable opportunity offered to make an attack upon the troops which were at and near Germantown. It was accordingly agreed that it should take place yesterday morning, and the following dispositions were made.

The divisions of Sullivan and Wayne, flanked by Conway's brigade, were to enter the town by the way of Chestnut-hill, while general Armstrong with the Pennsylvania militia should fall down the Manatawny road by Vandeering's mill, and get upon the enemy's left and rear.—The divisions of Greene and
Stephen,

Stephen, flanked by M'Dougal's brigade, were to enter, by taking a circuit by way of the lime-kiln road, at the market-house, and to attack their right wing; and the militia of Maryland and Jersey, under generals Smallwood and Forman, were to march by the old York road, and fall upon the rear of their right. Lord Stirling, with Nash and Maxwell's brigades, was to form a corps-de-reserve.

We marched about seven o'clock the preceding evening, and general Sullivan's advanced party, drawn from Conway's brigade, attacked their piquet at Mount Airy or Mr. Allen's house, about sun-rise the next morning, which presently gave way; and his main body, consisting of the right wing, following soon, engaged the light infantry and other troops encamped near the piquet, which they forced from their ground.—Leaving their baggage, they retreated a considerable distance, having previously thrown a party into Mr. Chew's house, who were in a situation not to be easily forced, and had it in their power, from the windows, to give us no small annoyance, and in a great measure to obstruct our advance.

The attack from our left column under general Greene began about three-quarters of an hour after that from the right, and was for some time equally successful. But I cannot enter upon the particulars of what happened in that quarter, as I am not yet informed of them with sufficient certainty and precision.

The morning was extremely foggy, which prevented our improving the advantages we gained, so well as we should otherwise have done. This circumstance, by concealing from us the true situation of the enemy, obliged us to act with more caution and less expedition than we could have wished, and gave the enemy time to recover from the effects of our first impression: and, what was still more unfortunate, it served to keep our different parties in ignorance of each other's movements, and hindered their acting in concert. It also occasioned them to mistake one another for the enemy,—which, I believe, more than any thing else, contributed to the misfortune which ensued.—In the midst of the most promising appearances, when every thing gave the most flattering hopes of victory, the troops began suddenly to retreat, and entirely left the field, in spite of every effort that could be made to rally them.

Upon the whole, it may be said the day was rather unfortunate than injurious.—We sustained no material loss of men, and brought off all the artillery, except one piece which was dismounted.—The enemy are nothing the better by the event; and our troops, who are not in the least dispirited by it, have

gained what all young troops gain by being in actions. We have had however several valuable officers killed and wounded, particularly the latter. General Nash is among the wounded, and his life is despaired of.—As soon as it is possible to obtain a return of our loss, I will transmit it.

In justice to general Sullivan and the whole right wing of the army, whose conduct I had an opportunity of observing, as they acted immediately under my eye:—I have the pleasure to inform you that both officers and men behaved with a degree of gallantry that did them the highest honor.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

P. S. As I have observed, I have not received a return of our loss: but, from what I have just now learned from general Greene, I fear it is more considerable than I at first apprehended—in men. The cannon, mentioned above, is said to have been brought off in a waggon.

SIR,

Camp near Pennibacker's Mill, October 7, 1777.

SINCE I had the honor of addressing you on the fifth, I have obtained a return of our loss in the action on Saturday, by which it appears to be much more considerable than I at first apprehended, though I always imagined myself that it was greater than it was generally supposed to be. The copy of the return inclosed will shew the amount as it now stands; but I hope many of those who are missing will yet come in: I fear however there are several under that denomination to be added to the number of the slain, as the action was warm in every quarter, from the information of the officers who commanded the different attacks.

What loss the enemy sustained, I am not able precisely to ascertain: but from a variety of corresponding accounts of persons who left the city since, and those of a deserter, it was very considerable. The deserter, who is intelligent, says general Agnew was killed, sir William Erskine wounded in the head and leg, and that their general loss, in killed and wounded amounted to near eight hundred. Several reputable persons from the city corroborate this, particularly with respect to general Agnew's death: some say upwards of two hundred waggons with wounded were carried in after the action, and before they came out, and that it was the common belief there, the enemy had been severely handled.

It is with much chagrin and mortification I add, that every
account

account confirms the opinion I at first entertained, that our troops retreated at the instant when victory was declaring herself in our favor.—The tumult, disorder, and even despair, which, it seems, had taken place in the British army, were scarcely to be paralleled: and it is said, so strongly did the ideas of a retreat prevail, that Chester was fixed on as their rendezvous. I can discover no other cause for not improving this happy opportunity, than the extreme haziness of the weather.

My intention is to encamp the army at some suitable place to rest and refresh the men, and recover them from the still remaining effects of that disorder naturally attendant on a retreat. We shall here wait for the reinforcements coming on, and shall then act according to circumstances.—General Varnum, with the detachment from Peekskill amounting to about twelve hundred, including officers, would be last night at Coryel's ferry. About five hundred militia from Virginia, and two hundred from Maryland, together with colonel Gibson's state regiment consisting of two hundred and twenty-six effectives, have already joined the army.—Since the action, general Forman's brigade of Jersey militia has quitted us. The men began to be uneasy at their situation, and desirous to return home: and as, by some intelligence received from general Dickinson, there was reason to imagine there might be a call for their services in the Jerseys, it was thought expedient to gratify their desire.

The state of our water defence on the Delaware is far from being as flattering as could be wished. After some slight opposition from the Jersey militia under general Newcomb, a detachment of the enemy took possession of Billingsport. This perhaps is an event of no material consequence: but it is to be lamented that many of the officers and seamen on board the galleys have manifested a disposition that does them little honor. Looking upon their situation as desperate, or probably from worse motives, they have been guilty of the most alarming desertions: two whole crews, including the officers, have deserted to the enemy. I learn however by captain Brewer, who is this moment arrived here from the fleet, that the accounts they have received from the city, of our late attack, were such as to have produced a favorable change, and to have inspired them with more confidence.—I would here observe, that the charge of bad conduct was by no means applicable to the whole:—far from it.—He further adds that four of the enemy's ships made an attempt yesterday morning to weigh the chevaux-de-frise opposite to Billingsport, but were repulsed by our galleys,—which has also contributed to raise the spirits of the seamen. Our garrison

garrison on Fort-Island, consisting of little more than two hundred continental troops under lieutenant-colonel Smith, appear determined to maintain their posts to the last extremity.

I beg leave to mention to Congress that there is a great deficiency of general officers to command this army. When the detachment coming from Peekskill joins us, we shall have thirteen brigades. These require as many brigadiers, and six major-generals.—instead of these, we shall have only four major-generals and six brigadiers; and the deficiency will be still increased by the death of general Nash, which, from every appearance, is momentarily to be expected. General Woodford's absence, occasioned by his wound, adds to our embarrassments, though it will be but for a time. Under these circumstances, Congress will be sensible that the government of the army cannot go on with that energy which is essential to its well-being and success. Neither officers nor men will transfer the respect and obedience they pay to a general officer, to a colonel who happens to be appointed to the temporary command of a brigade; nor will he, knowing his authority to be only temporary, be as solicitous to enforce it as one who is conscious he is to continue in the station he fills. Want of leisure prevents my being more particular at this time: but I shall take the liberty, in a day or two, to point out the troops that are in want of general officers, with my observations on the subject.

I cannot however omit this opportunity of recommending general M'Dougal to their notice. This gentleman, from the time of his appointment as brigadier,—from his abilities, military knowledge, and approved bravery,—has every claim to promotion. If I mistake not, he was passed over in the last appointment of major-generals, and younger officers preferred before him: but his disinterested attachment to the service prevented his acting in the manner that is customary in like circumstances. This, I think, gives him a peculiar title to esteem, and concurs with the opinion I have of his value as an officer, to make me wish it may appear advisable to Congress to promote him to one of the vacancies.

It would be well if the intended inquiry into the conduct of general St. Clair could be brought to a speedy issue; and, if he is acquitted to the satisfaction of Congress, that, as his general character as an officer is good, he may be again restored to the service.

By a letter this evening received from colonel Hawkes Hay of Haverstraw, dated the fifth at four o'clock P. M. four ships of war, a considerable number of armed vessels, eight transports,

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and forty flat-bottomed boats, arrived that morning in the bay opposite that place, and were landing troops at Verplank's Point.—Their number and design were not known.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

P. S. Inclosed you will find a copy of a letter from colonel Miffin, containing an account of the action of the fourth, as mentioned by the British officers in Philadelphia.—I would beg leave to observe, that I think miss * * * 's name should not be mentioned.

SIR,

Pennibacker's Mill, October 8, 1777.

AS general Howe's operations are in this quarter, and his object in all probability fixed for this campaign, I am induced to submit it to the consideration of Congress if the whole or a part of the regiment of artillery commanded by colonel Harrison should not be immediately ordered to join this army. In the late actions, the corps under general Knox has suffered severely; and it is so reduced by the number of killed, wounded, &c. that we are obliged to make draughts from the other battalions to supply their places. The measure I have ventured to submit will not, from present appearances, be attended with any ill consequences, if carried into execution,—and the less so, as the state of Virginia, according to my information, is raising another regiment. Should it be thought advisable, Congress will transmit their orders to colonel Harrison.—If the regiment comes, they need not bring their artillery.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

Camp, twenty-six miles from Philadelphia, October 10, 1777.

SIR,

ON wednesday evening I received the honor of your letter of the seventh with it several inclosures.—The providing of suitable quarters for the troops during the winter demands our attention: but I confess it is difficult to say where they will be. Sundry circumstances may occur in the course of the campaign, to render any provision, which might now be thought of, altogether improper.

In respect to general Putnam's letter, though the accounts transmitted by colonel Hawkes Hay indicate that the enemy had

GENERAL WASHINGTON'S

had some attack in contemplation, yet I cannot but think the force the general mentions to have been at New-York was greatly exaggerated. The highest number of the reinforcements, said to have arrived, is three thousand; and these are mentioned to be half boys. Other reports make it much less,—and some as low as five or six hundred.—However, be it what it may, it is not in my power to grant him aid.—Had the reinforcement arrived before the troops marched from Peekskill, so many might not have been ordered from thence. But the case was otherwise, or at least I was not apprised of their arrival; and the detachments from thence were directed by the advice of my general officers, who had under consideration the state of the whole force at that post and its dependencies, according to a general return. At the same time I urged general Putnam to call in all his out-posts, and to write in pressing terms to governor Trumbull to assist him with some militia.

I have not heard a single syllable more of the troops or fleet mentioned by colonel Hawkes Hay, except a vague report to-day that a number, supposed to be about fifteen hundred, had landed on this side the river at Haverstraw.—If the fact is so, it is probable they mean to pass through the Clove and invest the forts.—I have great confidence in the activity and bravery of governor Clinton; and I trust, if such is their view, they will meet at least with a spirited if not a successful opposition.—I have sent up lieutenant-colonel Radire, one of the engineers, with orders to direct such other works as may appear necessary.

There was a very severe cannonade on wednesday night: it began about twelve o'clock, and continued till yesterday morning between seven and eight. I have not learned the occasion; but, from the direction, suppose it was at Fort-Mifflin, or an engagement between our armed vessels and the enemy's ships, which probably were making a second attempt against the chevaux-de-frise.—I have determined to maintain the post at Red-bank, if it can be done, and have detached colonel Greene there with his regiment of Rhode-Island troops, consisting of about two hundred and twelve effective privates. I have also written to general Newcomb of Jersey, pressing him to give all the aid he can from the militia.

Since my letter of the seventh we have been joined by more of the Virginia militia.—The whole number now in camp amounts to about eleven hundred. Many of their arms are indifferent, and almost the whole are destitute of pouches and other necessary accoutrements.

On

On Sunday the enemy evacuated Billingsport.—They left all our cannon, but burned the platforms and carriages.

Inclosed you will receive a letter addressed to me by Colonel Portail. Congress will judge of the contents, and decide upon them as they may think they merit.

The military chest is nearly exhausted, not having more than ten thousand dollars in it; and a large part of the army is to pay for the month of August. Besides their claims, large sums are wanted by the quarter-master general, and for other purposes.—Congress, I hope, will order such immediate supply to be forwarded to the paymaster-general, as shall be in their power.

October 11.—I wish to know what stores of lead we have, and what expectations of further supplies. I am rather uneasy on this head, as I have not been able to obtain satisfaction on some inquiries within the course of a few days.

The cannonade mentioned above was between our gallies and a detachment of the enemy who were attempting to throw up a battery at Webb's or the lowest ferry on Schuylkill. It has been repeated this morning.—Their design, in erecting this battery, probably is to cover their passage to Province-Island, from whence, by occupying the grounds about the pest-houses, they may expect to annoy Fort-Mifflin.

Our distress for want of shoes and stockings is amazingly great, particularly for want of the former. On this account we have a great many men who cannot do duty, and several detained at the hospitals for no other cause.—I must request Congress to continue their exertions to relieve us, and to direct every supply of these and other necessities to be forwarded as soon as they possibly can after they are collected. It will be proper to send them on as fast as they can be procured, without waiting to make up a considerable quantity to be brought at one time.

I was this morning honored with your favors of the ninth, and their several inclosures.—I feel in the most sensible manner the honorable approbation Congress have been pleased to give of my conduct, and that of the army under my command, in the action on the fourth instant: nor am I less indebted to you, sir, for the polite mode in which you have conveyed their sentiments.—I shall communicate the resolve upon the subject to the army, and hope, if a favorable opportunity offers, under the smiles of providence, they will merit, by more substantial services, the further applause of their country.

The resolution of the eighth, for preventing supplies and intelligence being carried to the enemy, appears to me to be a salutary one; and I hope it will be attended with the most beneficial consequences. That it may be known among the inhabitants who are in their neighborhood, and who have been guilty of such practices, I would wish to receive several printed copies, that they may be distributed in proper places.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

P. S. I have just now received a line from the paymaster-general on the subject of money, which I inclose.

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SIR,

Head-Quarters, October 13, 1777.

SINCE I had the honor of addressing you on the eleventh instant, nothing material has happened between our army and general Howe's.—The inclosed copies of commodore Hazlewood and colonel Bradford's letters will shew the situation of affairs in the navy and at Fort-Mifflin, on the eleventh,—which are the latest accounts I have received from thence. But there has been a warm cannonade ever since, which continued, with but little intermission, till between two and three o'clock yesterday afternoon, when it ceased. The result I have not heard; but I hope, from the determined spirit of the fleet and the garriſon, matters continue as we could wish.

I received an expreſs laſt night from general Putnam, informing me of the capture of Fort-Montgomery, and the conſequent evacuation of Peekskill. I ſhould ſend copies of his letters to me: but as the expreſs who brought them had diſpatches for Congreſs, I conclude he has adviſed them fully on the ſubject.—Theſe events may have an unhappy influence on our northern affairs: but as the Connecticut militia ſeem to be coming in faſt, and governor Clinton is exerting himſelf to bring out the force of New-York,—if general Putnam can but keep pace with their fleet in their progreſs up the river, I hope he will be able to fruſtrate their deſign of relieving general Burgoyne, and that every thing will ſtill terminate well in that quarter.

It gives me pain to repeat ſo often the wants of the army: and nothing would induce me to it but the moſt urgent neceſſity. Every mode hitherto adopted for ſupplying them has proved inadequate, notwithſtanding my beſt endeavors to make the moſt of the means which have been in my power.—The incloſed return will ſhew how great our deficiency in the moſt eſſential

sential articles.—What new expedient Congress can devise for more effectually answering these demands, I know not, persuaded as I am that their closest attention has not been wanting to a matter of so great importance: but, circumstanced as we are, I am under an absolute necessity of troubling them, that if any new source can be opened for alleviating our distresses, it may be embraced as speedily as possible; for it is impossible that any army, so unprovided, can long subsist, or act with that vigor which is requisite to ensure success.

The return now inclosed is for troops present in camp,—besides which, there are numbers in the several hospitals, totally destitute of the necessaries they require to fit them for the field; and, on this account alone, are prevented from joining their corps. The recruits coming in are also in the same melancholy predicament.—I cannot ascertain with precision what quantity of clothing is at this time in Mr. Mease's hands: but, from every account, what he has can administer but a very partial relief.—I know he is entirely bare of some of the most capital articles we want.

With respect to cartouch-boxes, without which it is impossible to act, I cannot find from my inquiries that there are any in store. Several of the continental troops are deficient in this instance; and, what adds to our distress, there are but very few of the southern militia that are provided.—I am trying to make a collection about the country: but, from the information I have received, the measure will be attended with but little success.—This want, though not remedied immediately, may be removed in time; and I would take the liberty to recommend that the earliest attention should be had to making a large supply. I would also advise that much care should be used in choosing the leather:—none but the best and thickest is proper for the purpose; and each box should have a small inner flap for the greater security of the cartridges against the rain and moist weather. The flaps in general are too small, and do not project sufficiently over the ends or sides of the boxes.—I am convinced of the utility, nay necessity, of these improvements, and that the adoption of them, though they will incur an additional expense at first, will prove a considerable saving, and of the most beneficial consequences: for we know from unhappy experience in the severe rain on the sixteenth ultimo, the few boxes we had of this construction preserved the ammunition without injury, whilst it was almost wholly destroyed in those of the common form with a single flap.

There is one thing more which I cannot omit mentioning to
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Congress, and which, in my opinion, has a claim to their most serious attention,—I mean the general defective state of the regiments which compose our armies.—Congress will find, from a view of the returns transmitted from time to time, that they do not amount to half of their just complement. What can be done to remedy this, I know not : but it is certain every idea of voluntary enlistments seems to be at an end ; and it is equally certain that the mode of draughting has been carried on with such want of energy in some states, and so much disregarded in others, that but a small accession of force has been derived from it. These facts are sufficiently interesting of themselves.—But there are others to be added.—I am told that Virginia, in her regulations for draughting, extended her plan only to the nine regiments that were first raised. In what policy this was founded, I cannot determine : but the other six are to receive no reinforcements from that source.—Nor do matters stop here. The engagements of the first nine regiments, I am informed, were temporary ; and, according to the officers' accounts, the longest period to which any of the men are bound to serve is next April :—many are not obliged so long ; and there are some who claim a discharge at this time.—I do not mention these things through choice, but from a principle of duty, to the end that Congress may devise some timely and effectual provision for the whole, if such shall be in their power.—It is unnecessary to enlarge upon the subject ; and I will only observe that the consequences of calling the militia *[into the field in]* the course of the war have been so severely and ruinously felt, that I trust our views will never be turned to them but in cases of the greatest extremity.

In pursuance of the resolution of Congress, a court of inquiry has sat upon general Sullivan. They met on the tenth, and continued the examination till the twelfth, when they came to the inclosed opinion.—The depositions and papers which were before the court were many and prolix. They are not transmitted : but they may be obtained from the court, if wanted.—Besides the depository proofs which they had of wounded and dead officers, they had many gentlemen before them in person.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

P. S. *October 14.*—I last night received letters from commander Hazlewood and colonel Smith.—The situation of affairs was nearly the same, the evening before, as when the commander and colonel Bradford wrote on the tenth and eleventh.

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The cannonade mentioned above was from our galleys at the enemy's redoubts.

Head-Quarters at Peter Wintz's, October 16, 1777.

SIR,

I HAVE been duly honored with your favors of the twelfth and thirteenth instant, with their several inclosures.— In respect to the resolution directing a flag to be sent to general Howe, I am inclined to think that the information upon which it was framed was without foundation. The letters which have come from our officers who have been lately taken generally mention that their treatment has been tolerably good; and such privates as have escaped have said nothing in the course of their examination of their having been compelled to work.— For these reasons I have taken the liberty to decline sending the flag. At the same time Congress may be assured, if our prisoners suffer any wrongs, I shall take every means in my power to have them redressed as soon as I am apprised of them.

It is with the highest satisfaction I congratulate Congress on the success of our arms at the northward in the action of the seventh,—an event of the most interesting importance at this critical juncture. From the happy train in which things then were, I hope we shall soon hear of the most decisive advantages.

We moved this morning from the encampment at which we had been for six or seven days past, and are just arrived at the grounds we occupied before the action of the fourth. One motive for coming here is to divert the enemy's attention and force from the forts. These they seem to consider as capital objects, and (from their operations) mean to reduce, if possible.—At present their designs are directed against Fort-Mifflin and the chevaux-de-frise. I have therefore detached a further reinforcement to the garrison.

I yesterday, through the hands of Mrs. * * *, received a letter of a very curious and extraordinary nature from Mr. D * * *, which I have thought proper to transmit to Congress. To this ridiculous, illiberal performance, I made a short reply, by desiring the bearer of it, if she should hereafter by any accident meet with Mr. D * * *, to tell him I should have returned it unopened, if I had any idea of the contents;—observing at the

the same time, that I highly disapproved the intercourse ~~the~~ seemed to have been carrying on, and expected it would be discontinued.—Notwithstanding the author's assertion, I cannot but suspect that the measure did not originate with him; and that he was induced to it by the hope of establishing his interest and peace more effectually with the enemy.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

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Head-Quarters, near White-Marsh, October 21, 1777.

SIR,

I LAST night had the honor to receive your letter of the seventeenth instant, with its several inclosures.

I heartily wish the states may feel the importance of filling their battalions, and may, in consequence of the recommendation of Congress, adopt such measures as will prove effectual for the purpose. I cannot but think that heretofore there has been a want of attention in this instance, and that the subject, though interesting to the last degree, has been viewed with too much indifference. The resolutions respecting deserters, I hope, will also have their notice. It is highly necessary that they should come into some regulations for apprehending them, and punishing those who give them countenance. If this is not done, our force will be always diminishing, and no exertions in the army will prevent it. I shall try the effects of a proclamation on those who are now delinquents, and shall be happy if it meets with success; but confess, from the experiment I have made, that I am not sanguine in my expectations that it will be the case.

As to the recruiting officers, I must observe, that, notwithstanding the resolution of Congress of the thirty-first of July, and my circular letter on the subject of it to many of the states, I have not received an account that any officers have been appointed, except in Connecticut and Jersey.

On Sunday the enemy evacuated Germantown, and withdrew themselves within their lines near the city. They seem determined to reduce the forts, if possible; and, for this purpose, have thrown several parties over on Province-Island. I was informed this afternoon that a detachment also passed the Delaware at Cooper's ferry in the morning. If the account be true (and I have no doubt of it) it is highly probable they mean to make an attack upon the garrison at Red-bank. I am taking every

every measure in my power to counteract them, and have written to generals Forman and Newcomb of Jersey to afford every aid they can to relieve the fort, in case they do invest it.

Against Fort-Mifflin they have kept up a cannonade, more or less every day, and have thrown several shells, but without doing any considerable damage. The explosion of one killed a private, and wounded three others, who were in a barrack where it fell. They also set fire to two ammunition-boxes with a hot ball on the nineteenth, which did some injury to the barracks. I do not recollect that we have suffered lately in any instances besides these.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, October 24, 1777.

I DO myself the honor of transmitting to Congress the inclosed copies of sundry letters just now received, and congratulate them most sincerely on the important intelligence which they contain.—The damage the enemy have sustained in their ships, I hope, will prevent their future attempts to gain the passage of the river; and the repulse of the troops under count Donnop, and his captivity, I flatter myself, will also be attended with the most happy consequences. At the time these actions happened, a supply of ammunition was on the way to the forts; and I have also ordered a further quantity to be immediately sent.

By colonel Blaine, one of the issuing commissaries, who left Red-bank in the morning before the action, I am happily informed that he had thrown considerable supplies of provision into both garrisons. He also adds that he came from Jersey this morning, and that the enemy had recrossed the Delaware and returned to Philadelphia. I have written to colonel Greene that the prisoners must be immediately sent from his post: and Mr. Clymer, a deputy under Mr. Boudinot, will set out tomorrow morning to make a proper disposition of them.

It gives me great concern to inform Congress, that, after all my exertions, we are still in a distressed situation for want of blankets and shoes. At this time no inconsiderable part of our force are incapable of acting, through the deficiency of the latter: and I fear, without we can be relieved, it will be the case with two-thirds of the army in the course of a few days.

I am and have been waiting with the most anxious impatience for a confirmation of general Burgoyne's surrender. I have received

ceived no farther intelligence respecting it (excepting vague report) than the first account, which came to hand so long ago as Saturday morning.—If Congress have had authentic advices about it, I wish to be favored with them.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

Head-Quarters, near White-Marsh, November 1, 1777.

SIR,

I WAS duly honored with Mr. Hancock's letter of the twenty-fifth, with its several inclosures.—I shall take the case of John More under consideration, and will transmit colonel Mason my determination upon the same.

At this time I cannot inform the commissary whether any alterations have or have not been made by general orders in the original ration establishment. I have been under the necessity, from time to time, to send away my orderly books; and they are necessary to be examined on the subject. However, I think it probable that a departure from the first allowance may have been found expedient, and directed by some authority,—or the commissary would not have adopted it.—In respect to the alteration referred to my consideration, it is a matter of consequence, and I have desired the general officers to inform themselves whether it will be agreeable to the army at large, or what other regulations may be necessary in this instance.—As soon as I have their sentiments, I will write to Congress upon the subject.

The enemy still consider the possession of our posts upon the river of great importance; and, from their preparations of fascines, &c. and the best information I have been able to obtain, they will make further efforts to carry them.—Viewing them in this light myself, and imagining that they would persevere in their plans to occupy them, I wrote some days ago in the most pressing terms to generals Dickinson, Forman, and * * *, to afford every aid in their power from the militia of New-Jersey. As yet we have received but little; and I have no encouragement to expect that it will be much augmented in a short time. This does not proceed from a want of activity and exertion on the part of the two first-mentioned gentlemen, whose conduct and zeal upon every occasion give them a claim to the public esteem, but in a considerable degree to the peculiar circumstances of their state at this time. The apprehensions of an invasion

sion from Staten-Island keep a large proportion of the militia from the eastern and upper part of the state almost constantly employed at and in the neighborhood of Elizabethtown, and Mr. Livingston's powers, as governor, being expired,—and no provision made (it seems) for such a contingency,—there are none of sufficient authority to order them out, till a new appointment can be had :—at least there is ground to suspect that the orders and exertions of these two gentlemen, unassisted by civil authority, will not be attended with the advantages we wish, and which our affairs require. * * *

Under these circumstances I have been obliged to detach a further reinforcement of continental troops under general Var-num, to maintain the two garrisons, if possible,—besides sailors drawn from the line, to man the gallies. This detachment, when it arrives, added to the force now in the forts, will make the whole amount to sixteen hundred effective rank and file sent from this army.

After the action of the fourth ultimo at Germantown, I hoped we should have been in a situation to attack the enemy again on those grounds, and with more success than in the former instance : but this I was not able to effect. The severe rain on the sixteenth of September,—the action on the fourth,—the removal of our stores, and having to form a new elaboratory,—added to the small number of hands engaged in the business of it,—laid us under difficulties in the capital and essential article of ammunition, that could not be surmounted. Every exertion was directed to obtain supplies ; but (notwithstanding) they were inadequate, too scanty, and insufficient to attempt any thing on a large and general scale, before the enemy withdrew themselves. With what we had, in case an experiment had been made, fortune might have decided in our favor for the present ; but we should not have been afterwards in a situation to maintain the advantage we might have gained : and if a repulse had taken place, and the enemy pursued,—for want of a reserve, we might have been exposed to the most imminent danger of being ruined.—The distress of the soldiers for want of shoes was also a powerful obstacle to the measure.

I could wish that our circumstances were now such as to authorize a general attack for dislodging them from the city : but I think that they are not. This also is the opinion of my general officers, upon a full and comprehensive view of matters, as Congress will perceive by the inclosed copy of the minutes of council on the twenty-ninth ultimo, which I have taken the liberty to transmit and lay before them.—The superiority of numbers

the part of the enemy, in respect to regular troops,—their superior discipline, and the redoubts and lines which they have thrown up between the two rivers and about the city,—the happy state of our affairs at the northward, and the practicability of drawing succours from thence, the consequences of a defeat,—these were all motives which led to a decision against an attack at this time.

I have sent colonel Hamilton, one of my aides to general Gates, to give him a just representation of things, and to explain to him the expediency of our receiving the reinforcements which have been determined necessary, if they will not interfere with and frustrate any important plans he may have formed. Indeed I cannot conceive that there is any object now remaining, that demands our attention and most vigorous efforts so much as the destruction of the army in this quarter. Should we be able to effect this, we shall have little to fear in future.

General Howe's force, according to the state now made, is more considerable than it was generally supposed to be. I did not think it quite so great myself, but always imagined the common estimate much too low:—nor can I positively say what it really is. However, there are strong reasons to believe that it is not over-rated. After the evacuation of Germantown, an almost infinite number of scraps and bits of paper were found, which, being separated and arranged with great industry and care, bear the marks of genuine and authentic returns at different periods. The manner in which they were destroyed and disposed of gives no room to suspect that it was the effect of design.—In addition to this, I am informed by general Putnam that he had heard a reinforcement of four regiments was coming round to Delaware from New-York.

The inclosed return will give Congress a general view of the strength of this army when it was made, and a particular one of the forces of each state which compose it. By this they will perceive how greatly deficient the whole are in furnishing their just quotas.—The militia from Maryland and Virginia are no longer to be counted on:—all the former, except about two hundred, are already gone; and a few days, I expect, will produce the departure of the whole or chief part of the latter, from the importunate applications which some of them have made. Besides this diminution, I am apprehensive we shall have several men added to the sick list by reason of the late excessive rain and want of clothes.

We have not yet come to any determination respecting the disposition

disposition of our troops for the winter,—supposing it a matter of great importance, and that for the present we should be silent upon it. The reasons will readily occur. By continuing the campaign, perhaps many salutary if not decisive advantages may be derived; but it appears to me that this must depend upon the supplies of clothing which the men receive. If they cannot be accommodated in this instance, it will be difficult if not impossible to do it without effecting their destruction.

I would take the liberty to mention that I feel myself in a delicate situation with respect to the marquis La Fayette.—He is extremely solicitous of having a command equal to his rank, and professes very different ideas, as to the purposes of his appointment, from those Congress have mentioned to me:—he certainly did not understand them.—I do not know in what light they will view the matter: but it appears to me, from a consideration of his illustrious and important connections,—the attachment which he has manifested for our cause,—and the consequences which his return in disgust might produce,—that it will be advisable to gratify him in his wishes; and the more so, as several gentlemen from France, who came over under some assurances, have gone back disappointed in their expectations.—His conduct with respect to them stands in a favorable point of view,—having interested himself to remove their uneasiness, and urged the impropriety of their making any unfavorable representations upon their arrival at home: and in all his letters, he has placed our affairs in the best situation he could.—Besides, he is sensible, discreet in his manners, has made great proficiency in our language, and, from the disposition he discovered at the battle of Brandywine, possesses a large share of bravery and military ardor.

There is a French gentleman here,—monsieur Vrigny,—in whose favor the marquis seems much interested. He assures me he is an officer of great merit, and, from that motive and a regard to the service, wishes to see him promoted. The rank he holds in France, and his present expectations, are contained in the inclosed copy of a paper given me by the marquis. Monsieur Vrigny also has honorable certificates of his services, nearly corresponding with the marquis's account of them.—If Congress are pleased to honor him with a commission in the army of the states, I must try to employ him.

I took the liberty some short time ago to mention to Congress the situation of the nine first-raised Virginia regiments, and the term for which they stand engaged; and, considering that we should suffer greatly by the loss of so large a part of
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our force which have been long inured to service, I thought it advisable to consult the officers commanding them, upon the mode which should appear to them best calculated to re-enlist them. They accordingly met, and reported their sentiments in writing, a copy of which I have enclosed.—I do not know that expedients, more promising of success than those they have pointed out, can be adopted.—Congress will be pleased to give the matter their earliest attention, and to favor me with their opinion by the first opportunity, whether the indulgence and allowance they have proposed may be granted.—and, if any additional bounty may be given, what it shall be.—The high sums paid for substitutes and draughts, of late, even in the militia service, will make this necessary: for the soldiers, being well apprised of that fact, will not be induced to engage again during the war or for three years, for the usual premium.

I would also lay before Congress a remonstrance by the subaltern officers of the Virginia line, founded on a reform I thought necessary to take place in the regiments from that state. These, in their establishment, were made to consist of ten companies,—two more than were assigned to those of the states in general. This, and the great disproportion between the officers and men, induced me to reduce them to a level with the rest belonging to the continent, in order to prevent, a considerable unnecessary expense.—To effect this, no new promotions are to be made in the two extra companies, viz: the ninth and tenth, either to vacancies existing at the time of the regulation, or to any future ones that may happen therein: and the subalterns are to remain in their rank and command, till they can be promoted in the other eight companies, and their men incorporated.—This is what they complain of.—I have made a short state of facts, and wish Congress to determine upon them and the remonstrance as they shall think proper.

At the request of governor Clinton I have transmitted a copy of his letter to me, giving an account of general Vaughan's expedition up the North-river after the capture of Fort-Montgomery, and the destruction committed by his troops in burning Kingston and the houses and mills on the river.—According to the latest advices, they have returned again; and it is reported that they have destroyed the barracks and forts, and gone to New-York:—but this is not confirmed.

A few days ago, Mr. Franks of Philadelphia, agent for the British prisoners, sent out six thousand continental dollars to Mr. Richard Graham of Virginia, for the subsistence of the Hoffman and other prisoners in that state. The policy of suf-

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fering the enemy to support their prisoners with money which they refuse themselves, and which they attempt to depreciate in every instance they possibly can, appears to me very questionable,—and the more so, as it may be counterfeited.—Besides, they have laid us under every difficulty they can devise, as to our prisoners in their hands :—nothing will do for their support but hard money.—If the enemy were obliged to furnish the same, the quantity with us would be greater, and of course the means of relieving ours, easier. I do not know what consequences a prohibition against receiving continental money or the currency of any state from them might involve : I think the subject is worthy of the consideration of Congress ; and for that reason I have mentioned it.

November 3.—The report of the enemy's having destroyed the forts and barracks on the North-river, and of their having returned to New-York, is confirmed. I this morning received a letter from general Putnam upon the subject, a copy of which is transmitted.—The information that they mean to reinforce general Howe, I doubt not, is true : it has come through several channels, and nothing is more probable.—As to their having a further expedition in view, it seems to be questionable :—general Burgoyne's defeat, and the eastern troops being ready to be employed in another way, are circumstances against the measure.

Agreeable to my expectation, the Virginia militia are gone : so that we have none now in aid of the continental troops, but those of this state mentioned in the return, and a few from Maryland. I do not know what can or will be done to obtain further reinforcements of them : but it appears to me, taking matters in any point of light, that further aids should come from Virginia and Maryland : for, should we be able to accommodate the continental forces with clothes so as to carry on a winter campaign, their assistance will be material, either to maintain a blockade, or in any decisive stroke we may attempt. And if they cannot be so provided, and we should be obliged to retire into quarters, their service will be still more necessary to assist in covering the country against incursions for forage and provisions. The militia of this state, themselves, supposing they should be tolerably vigorous in their exertions, will not be equal to the task : at least it will be difficult, if not impracticable, for them to do it. It is to be wished that such as can be drawn out may be engaged to serve three months, or two at least (if it can be effected), after their arrival in camp ; and that a mode could be adopted to supply their places with others

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at the expiration of their term, should the exigency of our affairs require it. A time for their continuance should be fixed, or they will always be uneasy and pushing off; and the longer circumstances will admit it to be, the better: for, after the period recurs, for which they come, it will be impossible to retain them a moment. As to the number that should be required, it is difficult to determine: however, it is likely it will fall short of the requisition, as it ever has upon such occasions.

There is a report prevailing in camp, which has come through several channels, that a successful expedition has been made upon Rhode-Island, and eight hundred prisoners taken, with several pieces of artillery, and a large quantity of salt.—I heartily wish it may be true: but at present it wants confirmation.

Mr. Thompson's letter of the twenty-first ultimo, with its inclosures, came to hand yesterday. I join Congress most sincerely in congratulations on our important success in the surrender of general Burgoyne at the head of his forces, and am happy they have received a confirmation of the event from general Gates.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, White-Marsh, Nov. 8, 1777.

I DO myself the honor to inclose you an extract a letter from major-general Dickinson, of the sixth instant, by which it appears that a reinforcement has failed from New-York, either from general Howe or some other expedition. I have not yet heard whether any of the troops on their march from the northward have yet crossed the North-river: but I hope they will be with me near as soon as general Howe's reinforcement can arrive at Philadelphia.

There was a heavy firing of cannon all the day of the fifth, down the river; and in the evening some musketry was heard; from whence we concluded that an attack had been made upon Fort-Mifflin. But it turned out to be an attack made by general Varnum, with a twelve and an eighteen-pounder fixed near Red-bank, upon the enemy's ships. He thinks he damaged the Somerset of sixty-four guns considerably, as she got on ground, and was for some time exposed to his fire. The ships were obliged to quit their stations and fall lower down.

From

From a variety of accounts and circumstances, I am induced to believe that the enemy are meditating a grand blow against Fort-Mifflin. I have put the place in as good a state of defence as my present numbers will admit, and have directed general Varnum to afford every further assistance in his power. I therefore hope they will meet a warm reception whenever they make the attempt.

The military chest is again empty, and the army is unpaid for the months of September and October,—besides the draughts that are requisite for the commissary and quarter-master-general's department. You will therefore be pleased to direct a supply of cash to be sent on as expeditiously as possible.

I fear, from a letter which I have lately received from general Heath, that no proper measures are taken to put up a supply of salt provisions for next campaign, to the eastward. I have inclosed a copy of general Heath's letter to Mr. Buchanan, the commissary-general of purchases, and have desired him to have the matter looked into in time: but is of so much importance to the very existence of the army, that I think it deserves the attention of Congress.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

To HENRY LAURENS Esquire, President of Congress.

SIR,

Camp at White-Marsh, November 10, 1777.

I HAVE been duly honored with your favors of the fourth and fifth instant, with their several inclosures. Among those of the former, I found the resolution you are pleased to allude to, respecting your appointment as president. Permit me, sir, to congratulate you upon this event, and to assure you I have the most entire confidence that I shall experience in you during your presidency the same politeness, and attention to the interests of the states, that marked the conduct of your worthy predecessor.

With respect to the views of the navy-board for securing the frigates, the situation of the army would not admit of a compliance with them, supposing they would answer the end. I have therefore written to the board in the most pressing terms, to have the frigates scuttled in such way that they may be raised when it shall be necessary, and that in the mean time they may not be liable to injury from floating ice.—I see no measure so likely to secure them to us, and against the enemy's attempts.—

tempts.—I have been extremely fearful they would have possessed and employed them, with the Delaware and their batteries, on the rear of the galleys and the fort, while the ships below attacked in front. I need not point out the probable consequences of such an event: they are too obvious.

The resolves which you request to be communicated to the army shall be published in general orders.—The letters for commodore Hazlewood, &c. have been put in a proper channel of conveyance.

As to the disposition of part of the northern army, my letter of the first, continued to the third, contains my ideas upon the subject, and those my general officers. I shall be sorry if the measures I have taken on this head should interfere with or materially vary from any plans Congress might have had in view. Their proceedings of the fifth, I presume, were founded on a supposition that the enemy were still up the North-river, and garrisoning the forts they had taken.—This not being the case, and all accounts agreeing that reinforcements to general Howe are coming from York, I hope the aides I have required will be considered expedient and proper. Independent of the latter consideration, I think our exertions and force should be directed to effect general Howe's destruction if it is possible.

Among the various difficulties attending the army the adjustment of rank is not the least. This,—owing to the several modes, the several principles, that have prevailed in granting commissions,—is involving in great perplexity. The officers of the Pennsylvania troops are in much confusion about it: in many instances, those who were junior in rank, from local and other circumstances, have obtained commissions older in date than those which were granted afterwards to officers, their superiors before. This, with many other irregularities, has been and is the cause of great uneasiness: and, though precedence of rank so claimed should not be supported in justice or upon any principle,—we find all, having the least pretext for the title, strenuous to support it, and willing to hold a superiority. I was therefore induced to order a board of officers to take the matter under consideration. The result, respecting the field-officers of this state, I now inclose, and wish Congress to adopt the regulation which the board have made, and to transmit me, by the earliest opportunity, commissions dated according to their arrangement. At the same time it may be proper that there should be a resolve vacating the commissions they now have, and directing them to be delivered to me. Their attention

tention to this business, I trust, will be immediate: the disputes and jealousies with the officers require it.

I have inclosed the memorial of colonel Portail and the other engineers for their promotion, referred to me by the board of war for my sentiments.—As to the terms these gentlemen mentioned to have been proposed and agreed to when they first arrived, I know nothing of them further than the memorial states. In respect to their abilities and knowledge in their profession, I must observe they have had no great opportunity of proving them since they were in our service. However, I have reason to believe that they have been regularly bred in this important branch of war, and that their talents, which have been hitherto, as it were, dormant, want only a proper occasion to call them forth; in which case, I have no doubt they would do themselves honor, and the states essential service.—It is of great importance, too, to consider the practicability of replacing these gentlemen with persons equally qualified, if they should quit the service; and how indispensable men of skill in this branch of military science are to every army. While I am on this subject, I would take the liberty to mention that I have been well informed that the engineer in the northern army (Corieski, I think, his name is) is a gentleman of science and merit. From the character I have had of him, he is deserving of notice too. I would beg leave to mention that we are in great distress for want of money. This will be more urgent every day: and it is probable there will be a great deal of pay due to the troops coming to reinforce us.—General Putnam writes pressingly for a supply, and says he is in a most disagreeable situation for the want of it.—I must request the attention of Congress to this subject.

Your favor of the seventh came to hand this morning. I shall pay proper attention to the inclosures.—The rank of the officers of cavalry I will attempt to have settled as soon as circumstances will admit.

I have nothing very interesting to communicate.—The enemy have lost one of their new floating batteries: it sunk in a little time after it was launched. There has been a cannonade to-day:—it still continues:—I do not know the occasion, but imagine it is between the ships and galleys.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

Sir, *Camp near White-Marsh, November 11, 1777.*

The condition of the army for want of clothes and blankets,—and the little prospect I have of obtaining relief, according to the information I have received from the board of war,—occasion me to trouble you at this time. The mode of seizing and forcing supplies from the inhabitants, I fear, would prove very inadequate to the demands, while it would certainly embitter the minds of the people, and excite perhaps a hurtful jealousy against the army. I have had officers out for the purpose of purchasing and making voluntary collections of necessaries; and, in a few instances, more coercive measures have been exercised: but all these have proved of little avail: our distresses still continue, and are becoming greater. I would therefore humbly submit it to the consideration of Congress whether it may not be expedient for them to address the several legislative and executive powers of the states on this subject as early as possible, and in the most urgent terms. It appears to me, if they were to appoint, under the authority of Congress, proper active agents, that many necessaries might be procured in addition to those [*purchased*] on public account. Besides this, I think the exigency of our affairs requires that they should resolve on an immediate assessment to be made on the inhabitants.—If these modes were adopted, considerable aids might be derived, and in a way much less exceptionable than that of seizing by the army. The assemblies in many states, I believe, are now sitting; and I have no doubt, upon a requisition by Congress, but they will give attention to the measure.

Inclosed you will receive a copy of a letter from general Putnam, which came to hand to-day. You will find his and governor Clinton's opinion respecting the fortifications necessary to be made for the security of the North-river. As soon as I heard that Warner's militia were coming down to reinforce me, I immediately wrote to countermand them, and directed that they should be retained to carry on the necessary works during the time they are to serve.—My letter on this subject was on the ninth instant.—As to the other troops, the propriety of bringing them here, I believe, is not to be questioned. We are told through various channels that sir Henry Clinton is coming round with all the force that can possibly be spared from New-York; and it is said that those on Staten-Island are withdrawn. It is added also that the inhabitants of the former are greatly alarmed and disgusted, and that general Tryon is calling in the militia of Long-Island for the defence of the city. General Put-

nam's

nam's letter will also evince the necessity there is for a large and immediate supply of money being sent to the paymaster-general.

I have also the honor to transmit you a copy of a report by a board of general officers, on the subject of rations, which I submit to the consideration of Congress. The establishment and regulations which they propose appear to me to be just and necessary, supposing the commissary's estimate to be right, which I presume is the case, from the exorbitant price which has been and is now paid for every species of provision.—The necessity of an alteration in the former value has been long urged by many officers; and, for want of it, several, I believe, have left the service.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

P. S. By advices just received, thirty-eight transports have arrived in Delaware with troops. They were as high up as Reedy Island yesterday.—I suppose they are from New-York.—The memorial of colonel Portail and the other engineers, omitted to be inclosed in my letter of yesterday, is now transmitted.

Notwithstanding the measures I have ventured to recommend on the subject of clothing, I shall pursue every means in my power that will contribute to procure a supply.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, White-Marsh, Nov. 17, 1777.

I AM sorry to inform you that Fort-Mifflin was evacuated the night before last, after a defence which does credit to the American arms, and will ever reflect the highest honor upon the officers and men of the garrison. The works were entirely beat down, every piece of cannon dismounted, and one of the enemy's ships so near that she threw grenades into the fort, and killed men upon the platforms, from her tops, before they quitted the island. This ship had been cut down for the purpose, and so constructed that she made but a small draught of water, and by these means warped in between Fort-Mifflin and Province-Island. Some complaints are made that the captains of the galleys did not sufficiently exert themselves to drive this vessel from her station: but I shall not determine any thing upon the matter till a proper enquiry is made.

Nothing in the course of this campaign has taken up so much of the attention and consideration of myself and all the general officers, as the possibility of giving a further relief to Fort-Mifflin

fin than what we had already afforded. Such a garrison was thrown into it as has been found by experience capable of defending it to the last extremity: and Red-bank, which was deemed essentially necessary, not only for the purpose of keeping open the communication, but of annoying the enemy's ships and covering our own fleet, has been possessed by a considerable detachment from this army. The only remaining and practicable mode of giving relief to the fort was by dislodging the enemy from Province-Island, from whence they kept up an incessant fire. But this, from the situation of the ground, was not to be attempted with any degree of safety to the attacking party, without the whole or a considerable part of the army should be removed to the west side of Schuylkill to support and cover it.

To account for this, you must be made acquainted with the nature of the ground. In order to have made the attack upon Province-Island, the party destined for that purpose,—which should have been at least fifteen hundred,—must have marched down the Chester road as far as the Bell inn near Derby, and thence, turning towards Delaware, must have proceeded about four miles further through a neck of land, to the island. The enemy have a bridge at the middle ferry upon Schuylkill, which is but four miles from the Bell inn; consequently, by throwing a body of men over that bridge upon the first discovery of our design, and marching down to the Bell, they would have effectually cut off our detachment upon their return.—It is true the covering party might have consisted of a less number than the whole army: but then those remaining upon this side the river would have been too few to have been intrusted with all the artillery and stores of the army, within twelve miles of the enemy.

There were many and very forcible reasons against a total remove to the west side of Schuylkill. Leaving all our stores at Easton, Bethlehem, and Allentown, uncovered,—and abandoning several of our hospitals within reach of the enemy,—first presented themselves. Another, and in my opinion a more weighty reason than either of the preceding, was the importance of supporting the post at Red-bank, upon which that of Fort-Mifflin in a great measure depended, as through it we sent in supplies of men, provision, and ammunition. The enemy, sensible of this, endeavored to dislodge us from Red-bank on the twenty-second of last month; which, as Congress have been informed, cost them four hundred men.

Now, had our army been on the west side of Schuylkill, they might

might, without any danger of an attack upon their lines, have thrown over so considerable a force into Jersey, that they might have overpowered the garrison, and, by making themselves masters of it, have reduced Fort-Mifflin by famine or want of ammunition. Thus we should in all probability have lost both posts by one stroke.—They might also, by taking possession of the fords upon Schuylkill, have rendered the junction of our northern reinforcements with us a very difficult, if not an impracticable matter: and, should any accident have happened to them, we should have stood a very poor chance of looking general Howe in the face through the winter with an inferior army. We should finally have thrown the army into such a situation, that we must inevitable have drawn on a general engagement before our reinforcements arrived; which, considering our disparity of numbers, would probably have ended with the most disagreeable consequences.

It was therefore determined a few days ago to wait the arrival of the reinforcement from the northward before any alteration could safely be made in the disposition of the army: and I was not without hopes that the fort would have held out till that time.—That we might then have moved without endangering the stores, I had given orders for the removal of them, from the places before mentioned, to Lebanon and other places in Lancaster county, which is at any rate more safe and convenient than where they were.

As the keeping possession of Red-bank, and thereby still preventing the enemy from weighing the chevaux-de-frise before the frost obliges their ships to quit the river, has become a matter of the greatest importance, I have determined to send down general St. Clair, general Knox, and baron Kalb, to take a view of the ground, and to endeavor to form a judgment of the most probable means of securing it. They will at the same time see how far it is possible for our fleet to keep their station since the loss of Fort-Mifflin, and also make the proper inquiry into the conduct of the captains of the galleys, mentioned in the former part of this letter.

I am informed that it is matter of amazement, and that reflections have been thrown out against this army, for not being more active and enterprising than, in the opinion of some, they ought to have been. If the charge is just, the best way to account for it, will be to refer you to the returns of our strength, and those which I can produce of the enemy, and to the inclosed abstract of the clothing now actually wanting for the army: and then I think the wonder will be, how they keep the field

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at all in tents at this season of the year.—What stock the clothier-general has to supply this demand, or what are his prospects, he himself will inform you, as I have directed him to go to York-town to lay these matters before Congress. There are, besides, most of those in the hospitals more bare than those in the field:—many remain there for want of clothes only.

Several general officers, unable to procure clothing in the common line, have employed agents to purchase up what could be found in different parts of the country. General Wayne, among others, has employed Mr. Zantinger of Lancaster, who has purchased to the amount of four thousand five hundred pounds, for which he desires a draught upon the treasury-board.—Inclosed you have a copy of his letter.—I am not clear whether this application should properly be made to the treasury, or the clothier-general, who should charge the money to the regiments for whom the clothes are, as so much advanced to them. If the latter should appear the most proper mode, I will order it to be done.

I am anxiously waiting the arrival of the troops from the northward, who ought, from the time they have had my orders, to have been here before this. Colonel Hamilton, one of my aides, is up the North-river, doing all he can to push them forward: but he writes me word that he finds many unaccountable delays thrown in his way. However I am in hopes that many days will not elapse before a brigade or two, at least, arrive.—The want of these troops has embarrassed all my measures exceedingly.

November 18.—Your dispatches of the thirteenth and fourteenth have this moment come to hand. They shall be attended to, and answered in my next.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR, *Head-Quarters, White-Marsh, November 23, 1777.*

I HAVE been duly honored with your favors of the thirteenth and nineteenth instant with their inclosures.—I am well assured Congress have not been inattentive to the necessities of the army: and that the deficiency in our supplies, particularly in the article of clothing, has arisen from the difficulty of importing, on account of the numerous fleet that line our coast. However I am persuaded that considerable relief might be drawn from the different states, were they to exert themselves properly

properly. This I hope will be the case as soon as they receive the pressing recommendations of Congress upon the subject.

It has been the unvaried custom of the enemy, from the commencement of the present contest, to try every artifice and device to delude the people. The message through John Brown was calculated for this end. I am surprised Mr Willing should suffer himself to be imposed on by such flimsy measures. He knows that there is a plain obvious way for general and lord Howe to communicate any proposals they wish to make, to Congress, without the intervention of a second and third hand. But this would not suit their views.—I am sorry that Mr. Brown should be the bearer of the message; as, from the character I have had of him, he is a worthy, well-disposed man. It has been frequently mentioned that he had interested himself much in behalf of our prisoners, and had afforded them every relief and comfort his circumstances would allow him to give.

I have been endeavoring to effect an exchange of prisoners, from principles of justice, and from motives of humanity: but at present I have no prospect of it. Yet general Howe has assured our officers it was his wish, and, if it could not be done, that he should readily agree to their release on parole.—The inclosed copies of my letters and his answer will shew Congress what has passed between us upon that subject; and at the same time, that I had remonstrated against the severe and cruel treatment of the prisoners, and proposed the plan of sending in a suitable person to inquire into the facts, before the receipt of their resolution. Their sufferings, I am persuaded, have been great, and shocking to humanity. I have called upon general Howe for redress, and an explicit answer to my letter of the fourteenth. If I do not receive one by to-morrow night, with the most positive and satisfactory assurances that a proper conduct shall be observed towards them in future, we must retaliate, however much we wish to avoid severity, and measures that bear the smallest appearance of rigor or inhumanity.

Inclosed you will receive a list of sundry officers who have been cashiered since the action of the fourth ultimo.—I flatter myself that these examples will involve many favorable and beneficial consequences.—Besides these, there were many more brought to trial, who were acquitted; among them, general Maxwell, and general Wayne,—the former for charges against him while he commanded the light troops,—the latter for charges against his conduct in the attack made on his division, in the night of the twentieth of September. The result of the court

court of inquiry against general Wayne not entirely exempting him from censure in his own opinion, he requested a court-martial; and, upon a full and minute investigation of the charges against him, he was honorably acquitted, and in terms of high respect.

I am sorry to inform Congress that the enemy are now in possession of all the water defences.—Fort-Mifflin and that at Red-bank mutually depended on each other for support; and the reduction of the former made the tenure of the latter extremely precarious, if not impracticable. After the loss of Fort-Mifflin, it was found Red-bank could derive no advantages from the galleys and armed vessels—(they could not maintain their station)—and, in case of investiture, the garrison could have no supplies, no retreat, nor any hope of relief, but such as might arise from a superior force acting without on the rear of the enemy, and dislodging them. Under these circumstances, the garrison was obliged to evacuate it on the night of the twentieth instant, on the approach of lord Cornwallis who had crossed the river from Chester with a detachment, supposed to be about two thousand men, and formed a junction with the troops lately arrived from New-York, and those that had been landed before at Billingsport.

From general Varnum's account, I have reason to hope that we saved most of the stores, except a few heavy cannon: however I cannot be particular in this instance.—I am also to add, from the intelligence I have received, that most if not all the armed vessels have been burned by our own people, except the galleys, one brig, and two sloops, which are said to have run by the city.—How far this might be founded in necessity, I am not able to determine; but I suppose it was done under that idea, and an apprehension of their falling into the enemy's hands if they attempted to pass up the river.

Upon the first information I had of lord Cornwallis's movement, I detached general Huntington's brigade to join general Varnum, and, as soon as possible, general Greene with his division; hoping that these,—with Glover's brigade which was on the march through Jersey, and which I directed to file off to the left for the same purpose,—and with such militia as could be collected,—would be able to defeat the enemy's design, and to preserve the fort. But they were so rapid in their advances, that our troops could not form a junction and arrive in time to succour the garrison; which obliged them to withdraw.

General Greene is still in Jersey; and when Glover's brigade joins him, if an attack can be made on lord Cornwallis with

with a prospect of success, I am persuaded it will be done. About a hundred and seventy of Morgan's corps are also gone to reinforce him.

Generals Poor and Patterson with their brigades, and colonel Bailey with Learned's, are now in camp. The last arrived on Friday evening, the other two in the course of yesterday. I have not yet obtained returns of their strength; but, from the accounts of the officers, they will amount in the whole to twenty-three or twenty-four hundred rank and file. But I find many of them are very deficient in the articles of shoes, stockings, breeches, and blankets.—Besides these, about three hundred and fifty men,—detachments from Lee's, Jackson's, and Hensley's regiments,—have joined me.

Yesterday evening the enemy burned several houses in the neighborhood of Philadelphia, and they have committed the most wanton spoil in many others.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, November 26, 1777.

I WAS yesterday morning honored with your favors of the twenty-second instant.—I wish the measures Congress have adopted may effectually suppress the disturbances in the western department. Should they prove successful and the savages and wicked deluded inhabitants receive a severe check, it is probable they will not be induced again to take part against us, or at least for some considerable time. Colonel Crawford set out yesterday evening, and will be with Congress, I expect, in the course of two or three days to take their commands.

I was much obliged by the foreign intelligence you were pleased to transmit me: it is agreeable and interesting: and I heartily wish there may be an early declaration of hostilities between France and Britain. From these advices, things seem to be getting into a proper train for it: and it is not easily to be conceived that it can be much longer delayed. However our expectations have not been answered in this instance, and they may yet be held in suspense. The political reasons, that lead to delay on the part of France, I do not perfectly understand. As to Britain, her honor is lost in the contest with us, and the most indignant insults will scarcely be able to draw her attention from her present pursuits.—The account of Mr. Lee having effected the purposes of his embassy at the court of Berlin is of great importance, if it be true. In such case,

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administration, however desirous they may be, will probably be disappointed in their schemes of further mercenary aides against us.

I must take the liberty to request the decision of Congress on the case of the nine first-raised Virginia regiments as early as circumstances will permit. If the plan proposed for re-enlisting them is judged expedient, one capital inducement to that end, suggested by the officers, will cease if it is longer delayed. It is a matter of considerable importance, and of which I wish to be satisfied as soon as possible.—I should also be happy in their determination respecting the marquis De la Fayette. He is more and more solicitous to be in actual service, and is pressing in his applications for a command.—I ventured before to submit my sentiments upon the measure; and I still fear a refusal will not only induce him to return in disgust, but may involve some unfavorable consequences.—There are now some vacant divisions in the army, to one of which he may be appointed, if it should be the pleasure of Congress. I am convinced he possesses a large share of that military ardor which generally characterises the nobility of his country. He went to Jersey with general Greene, and I find he has not been inactive there. This you will perceive by the following extract from a letter just received from general Greene.

“The marquis, with about four hundred militia and the rifle corps, attacked the enemy's piquet last evening, killed about twenty, wounded many more, and took about twenty prisoners. The marquis is charmed with the spirited behavior of the militia and rifle corps:—they drove the enemy about half a mile, and kept the ground until dark. The enemy's piquet consisted of about three hundred, and were reinforced during the skirmish.—The marquis is determined to be in the way of danger.”

* * * I must request you to transmit me a number of bank commissions as soon as you have an opportunity to do it. There are several vacancies yet to fill; and the officers entitled to them are anxious to be appointed. The commissions I want should be under your signature, and not Mr. Hancock's. I mention this, lest you should send any of the latter that might remain. Those signed by you will be competent to all cases: those by Mr. Hancock, only to such as happened during his presidency; and of these I have now some.

November 27.—Inclosed you will receive a copy of general Howe's letter in answer to mine of the fourteenth and twenty-third, which only came to hand last night, and at an instant when

when I was giving the commissary of prisoners instructions forthwith to confine a number of the officers in our hands, and to put the privates under very different restrictions from those they have been used to.—I am in hopes the treatment of ours will be much better in future. Mr. Boudinot will immediately take measures for releasing the officers on parole, that we may relieve an equal number of ours. I should have been happy to have effected a general exchange, or a partial one: but general Howe will not upon any terms but those he has ever insisted on.

The enemy have got up several of their ships to the city. It is likely they have found a passage through the chevaux-de-frise, or they may have removed them.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR, *Head-Quarters, White-Marsh, December 1, 1777.*

ON saturday I had the honor to receive your favor of the twenty-sixth ultimo with its inclosures.—The resolve of the twenty-fifth I have bulished in orders, agreeable to direction, and shall be happy if Congress can fall upon measures to render the situation of the officers and soldiery more eligible than what it now is. At present it is truly distressing: and, unless some means can be devised to support them more comfortably, we shall have to apprehend the most alarming consequences. The officers, or at least a large proportion of them, as well as the men, are in a most disagreeable condition as to clothing, and without any certain prospect of relief: and, what is still more painful,—if perchance they have an opportunity of purchasing (which is seldom the case), they have the mortification to find themselves totally incompetent to it, from the depreciation of our money, and the exorbitant prices demanded for all articles in this way.—This is the source of great uneasiness, of indifference to the service, and of repeated (I may say, daily) applications to leave it, and these too by as good officers as are in the American line.

In respect to promotions for merit and intrepidity, I would beg leave to observe, that, though these are proper considerations to found them upon, yet they should be made with the greatest caution and attention, and only in cases of the most eminent and distinguished services. Every promotion or rise out of common course cannot fail to excite uneasiness in a greater or lesser degree: and nothing will reconcile them to the army

my at large, and particularly the officers more immediately affected by them,—but where the causes are known and acknowledged. This I mention from my wishes to promote the public interest, from my knowledge that harmony is essential to this end, and from no other motive whatever.

Before the receipt of your favor, I do not recollect to have heard of John Simper's case. His brother has not been with me. As soon as he arrives, I shall give directions for him to be released from his present confinement, and to be forwarded to Cecil county.

I have nothing material to inform Congress of.—Lord Cornwallis and the detachment under his command (mentioned in my last) returned from Jersey on thursday.—We had reason to expect an attack since, from our advices from the city, but have been disappointed.—General Greene has also joined me with all the troops that were with him, except Huntington's brigade, which will be in to-day.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, White-Marsh, Dec. 10, 1777.

I HAVE the honor to inform you, that, in the course of last week, from a variety of intelligence, I had reason to expect that general Howe was preparing to give us a general action. Accordingly, on thursday night he moved from the city with all his force, except a very inconsiderable part left in his lines and redoubts,—and appeared the next morning on Chestnut-hill, in front of, and about three miles distant from, our right wing. As soon as their position was discovered, the Pennsylvania militia were ordered from our right, to skirmish with their light advanced parties; and I am sorry to mention that brigadier-general Irvine who led them on had the misfortune to be wounded and to be made prisoner.—Nothing more occurred on that day.

On friday night, the enemy changed their ground, and moved to our left, within a mile of our line, where they remained quiet and advantageously posted the whole of the next day. On saturday they inclined still further to our left; and, from every appearance, there was reason to apprehend they were determined on an action.—In this movement, their advanced and flanking parties were warmly attacked by colonel Morgan and his corps, and also by the Maryland militia under colonel Gift. Their loss I cannot ascertain: but I am informed it was considerable,

derable, having regard to the number of the corps who engaged them.—About sun-set after various marches and counter-marches, they halted; and I still supposed, from their disposition and preceding manœuvres, that they would attack us in the night or early the next morning: but in this I was mistaken.

On monday afternoon they began to move again, and, instead of advancing, filed off from their right: and the first certain account that I could obtain of their intentions was that they were in full march towards Philadelphia by two or three routes.—I immediately detached light parties after them to fall upon their rear: but they were not able to come up with them.

The enemy's loss, as I have observed, I cannot ascertain. One account from the city is that five hundred wounded had been sent in; another is that eighty-two waggons had gone in with men in this situation. These, I fear, are both exaggerated, and not to be depended upon.—We lost twenty-seven men in Morgan's corps, killed and wounded, besides major Morris, a brave and gallant officer, who is among the latter. Of the Maryland militia there were also sixteen or seventeen wounded. I have not received further returns yet.

I sincerely wish that they had made an attack, as the issue, in all probability,—from the disposition of our troops, and the strong situation of our camp,—would have been fortunate and happy. At the same time I must add, that reason, prudence, and every principle of policy, forbade us quitting our post to attack them. Nothing but success would have justified the measure: and this could not be expected from their position.

The constant attention and watching I was obliged to give the enemy's movements would not allow me to write before: and this I believe was the less material, as I have reason to think your committee who were in camp most of the time, and who are now here, transmitted an account of such occurrences as they deemed important in any degree. The first cause too, sir, and my engagements with the committee previous to the coming out of the enemy, will, I trust, sufficiently apologise for my not acknowledging before the honor of your favors of the thirtieth ultimo and the first instant, which came to hand in due order and time.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

Head.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, Valley-Forge, January 2, 1778.

I TAKE the liberty of introducing major John Clarke, the bearer of this, to your notice. He entered the service at the commencement of the war, and has for some time past acted as aid-de-camp to major-general Greene. He is active, sensible, and enterprising, and has rendered me very great assistance since the army has been in Pennsylvania, by procuring me constant and certain intelligence of the motions and intentions of the enemy.—It is somewhat uncertain whether the state of the major's health will admit of his remaining in the military line: if it should, I may perhaps have occasion to recommend him in a more particular manner to the favor of Congress at a future time. At present, I can assure you that if you should, while he remains in the neighborhood of York, have any occasion for his services, you will find him not only willing but very capable of executing any of your commands.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Valley-Forge, January 5, 1778.

I YESTERDAY evening had the honor of your favor of the first instant, with its several inclosures. The letter you allude to, from the committee of Congress and board of war, came to hand on saturday morning: but it does not mention the regulations adopted for removing the difficulties and failures in the commissary line. I trust they will be vigorous, or the army cannot exist. It will never answer, to procure supplies of clothing or provision by coercive measures:—the small seizures made of the former a few days ago in consequence of the most pressing and absolute necessity,—when that, or to dissolve, was the alternative,—excited the greatest alarm and uneasiness even among our best and warmest friends. Such procedures may give a momentary relief; but, if repeated, will prove of the most pernicious consequence. Besides spreading disaffection, jealousy, and fear in the people, they never fail, even in the most veteran troops under the most rigid and exact discipline, to raise in the soldiery a disposition of licentiousness, to plunder and robbery,—difficult to suppress afterwards, and which has proved not only ruinous to the inhabitants, but, in many instances, to armies themselves.—I regret the occasion that compelled us to the measure the other day; and shall consider

sider it among the greatest of our misfortunes, if we should be under the necessity of practising it again.

I had received from the board of war a copy of the resolutions of the twenty-ninth ultimo, and published such parts in orders as were directed. I shall endeavor as far as possible, to carry the intention of Congress into execution, respecting the extra pay, and to prevent any from receiving it, who do not come under their description.—The three packets with commissions came safe to hand.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

I am now under the necessity of keeping several parties from the army threshing grain, that our supplies may not fail:—but this will not do.—As to meat, our stock is trifling, not being sufficient for more than two days, if so long, with the most sparing economy.

SIR,

Valley Forge, January 9, 1778.

I YESTERDAY evening had the honor to receive your favor of the fifth instant, with its inclosures.—The power Congress has been pleased to vest me with, for appointing aides-de-camp, I shall use with economy, and I will not appoint more at any time than shall be necessary and essential to advance the public interest. Any future appointments that may be material will be made out of the line of the army, if circumstances will allow it. In general this has been the case.

The proceedings of Congress for the detention of general Burgoyne and army, or rather suspending their embarkation, till the convention of Saratoga is explicitly ratified and notified by the court of Britain, shall remain secret here till they are duly announced by Congress.—This procedure, when known to the general, will chagrin him much: for I learn by a letter from general Heath, that the refusal to let his troops embark at Rhode-Island or in the Sound had given him some uneasiness.—I have nothing of importance to communicate; and have only to add that I have the honor to be, with great respect, &c.

G. W.

P. S. The great diversity of opinions prevailing, as to the operation which the resolves of the thirtieth ultimo and first instant should have, which gave a month's extra pay, makes it necessary for me to request Congress to describe with certainty and precision the persons who they intended should be

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the particular objects of their benevolence. Without this, I am certain I shall not be able to execute the resolves according to their intention, and in a manner that will be agreeable to the army.

If such officers and men as were in camp when the resolves were passed, and who continue the whole winter, are the only objects to be benefited, it is urged that many who have discharged their duty with fidelity,—who have experienced a severe campaign to that time or till a few days before,—who may be now out of camp, and yet be here in the course of the winter,—will be excluded. For example, all officers and men on furlough, though they should have been long from their homes before,—perhaps much longer in many instances, than many who remain,—and whose private necessities oblige them to be absent,—those who have fallen sick from their services, and who are in hospitals or in the country,—detachments on command,—these would be excluded. Such discriminations, I believe, will give great disgust and uneasiness.—It is difficult, in cases of this nature, to draw a proper line of distinction, and impossible to do it in such a way as to give satisfaction.

I do not mean to enlarge upon the subject: my only wish is to have it precisely ascertained, who are to be included and paid, and who are not, under the resolves, that I may not on the one hand act contrary to the public intention, and on the other give cause of complaint, and perhaps do wrong to individuals.

Knowing the difficulty of drawing a proper line, and the disgust and murmurings that ever attend discriminations,—were I to advise upon the subject, only such officers and men should be excluded (since extra pay has been determined on) as are absent from camp without regular authority, or such as may abuse indulgencies regularly obtained.

It has been observed by some, and perhaps with propriety, that there are officers and men now in camp, or who may be shortly in, who have no superior claim to merit,—whose affairs are not so pressing, or who have already had indulgencies,—or who, from their being nearer their friends and connections, have had opportunities of seeing them frequently, of ordering their concerns, and visiting their homes once, twice, or perhaps oftener in the campaign.—whilst they who were more remote were precluded from any of these advantages, and were constantly on duty. These considerations will have their weight in the scale of disgust with the parties interested.—For my part, though

though the resolves were founded in principles of generosity,—were intended to reward merit, and promote the service,—from the difficulties attending the execution, I wish they had never been made, especially as I believe officers and men would in a little time have become tolerably well reconciled to their quarters.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Valley-Forge, January 12, 1778.

AS I do not recollect with precision whether any, or what resolutions have been made by Congress respecting captures by the army or detachments of it, and not having all their proceedings with me, with which I have been honored from time to time to assist my enquiries upon the subject,—I must take the liberty to request that they will determine, and favor me with their decisions upon, the following points :

1. What articles captured are to be considered as public property?

2. Whether articles captured by parties or detachments, not determined public property, are to be distributed or sold for the benefit of the army at large, or are to be considered as the sole and exclusive right of the captors?

3. If, in general instances, such articles as are taken, and which are not considered public property, are determined to be the sole and exclusive right of the captors,—are stationary detachments, who, from their situation, have much more than a common chance of making prizes, to be considered upon the same footing?

4. If there is to be a distinction between stationary and other detachments,—and the former are denied an exclusive right to the captures they make,—what proportion of the articles are they to have?

I have been induced to state the above questions on account of some difficulties that have arisen respecting the prize taken by the detachment at Wilmington under general Smallwood; that the same may be determined, and certain principles established, to govern in like and future cases.—In the instance of this prize, as the baggage taken (from general Smallwood's and the officers' representation) will be but inconsiderable when divided among themselves, I have consented that they shall have it at a just appraisement and distribution, and have directed him to have the whole, and the value, properly inven-

toried, that such order may be made respecting the latter, as the decisions of Congress may justify and point out. I have also directed the sale of the brig, as I understand some offers have been made for her, and as her situation may be considered hazardous and precarious.

Besides the brig taken at Wilmington, a vessel has stranded at Reedy-Island with goods on board. It is said a quantity of rum, some bales of cloth, a number of hats, and some other articles (all wanted by the army), have been taken out of her by the militia, particularly those of Kent county. These general Smallwood is endeavoring to find, that they may be of public benefit.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, January 13, 1778.

THIS will be delivered to you by the chevalier De Mau-
duit du Pleffis, who was among the first French officers that
joined the army of the United States. The gallant conduct of
this young gentleman at Brandiwine, Germantown, and his dis-
tinguished services at Fort-Mercer where he united the offices
of engineer and commandant of artillery, entitle him to the
particular notice of Congress.—He made several judicious al-
terations in the works at Red-bank, shewed great good conduct
during the action in which the Hessians were repulsed, and was
spoken of, in consequence, in terms of the highest applause, by
the commanding officer of the post.—After the evacuation was
determined upon, he became the means of saving some valuable
artillery and stores, and cheerfully undertook, as volunteer, the
hazardous operation of blowing up the magazine, &c. without
the apparatus usually provided upon such occasions.—I must
further add in monsieur Du Pleffis' favor, that he possesses a de-
gree of modesty not always found in men who have performed
brilliant actions. It is with pleasure therefore that I recom-
mend it to Congress to grant him a brevet of lieutenant-colo-
nel,—a reward due to his merit, and which will not have the
inconvenience of occasioning any dissatisfaction in the corps to
which he belongs.

As some particular circumstances have prevented monsieur
Du Pleffis waiting upon Congress sooner, I hope there will be
no difficulty in antedating the brevet, so that the recompense
may more immediately follow the services which he has done.
At the same time, that there may not be any uneasiness on the

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part of monsieur Fleury whom Congress have been pleased to reward in the same way, and as their times of service are nearly equal in France, I would propose that monsieur Du Plessis' brevet should bear the same date, viz. the twenty-sixth of November.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Valley-Forge, January 31, 1778.

I HAVE been honored with your several favors of the fourteenth, nineteenth, twenty-second and twenty-fifth instant, in due order, with their inclosures, which shall have my attention. My application in preparing and digesting matters for the consideration of the committee who are now in camp, prevented me acknowledging them before.—The packet for governor Livingston, which accompanied the first two, I transmitted him the next day by a careful hand, and hope it got safe to him.

The inclosed copy of a letter and memorial from general Forman I would take the liberty of laying before Congress.—Supplying the army with salt is a matter of infinite importance; and if it can be accomplished, it is very much to be desired.—How far general Forman may succeed in his experiments, I cannot determine: but, from every account, there is a favorable prospect of his manufacturing a considerable quantity of this necessary and essential article.—For the greater security of the works against the enemy's tenders, &c. he prays to be furnished with a guard of fifty men. His requisition is submitted to Congress; and they will be pleased to determine upon it in such manner as they may think proper.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Valley-Forge, February 3, 1778.

ON the ultimo I had the honor to receive your favor of the twenty-seventh with the copies alluded to.—As the proceedings of Congress in this instance seem to imply that our unfortunate people in the hands of the enemy are to be victualled by us, I have only to wish that the supplies may be constant and plentiful. I have transmitted your letter to Mr. Boudinot who is out of camp, and have requested his most pointed attention to the business. I have also written to gene-

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ral Howe upon the occasion, and inclosed him one of the copies.—In my next I shall take the liberty of transcribing you a copy of my letter to him on this head, and of some others which have lately passed between us.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

P. S. I wish a supply of money to be sent as soon as possible. Our distresses for want of it are not easily to be described.—What Mr. Palfrey brought with him was not sufficient to pay the troops for November, by two hundred and fifty or three hundred thousand dollars. The demands were immense, most of the eastern troops having had four or five months' pay due to them, and some, more. The army now in general has three months' pay in arrear, exclusive of the month's extra pay; and, besides this, the quarter-master is pressing for large draughts for the purposes of his department, though he has received a proportion of the money which came with Mr. Palfrey.

SIR,

Valley Forge, February 8, 1778.

I HAVE been duly honored with your favor of the third instant, and with its inclosures.

As general M'Dougall's late severe illness and present feeble state will not permit him to proceed on the intended excursion into Canada, baron De Kalb will follow the marquis agreeable to his wish and the direction of Congress.

According to the promise contained in my last, I take the liberty to transmit you copies of such letters as have lately passed between general Howe and myself.

February 12.—Since writing the above I have received another letter from general Howe, of the fifth instant, a copy of which, and of my answer, you have also inclosed. By these you will perceive that he has proposed a general exchange of prisoners, and that I have acceded to it.—I have written to Mr. Boudinot, commissary in this line, requiring his return to camp; and shall give him directions to pursue the most speedy measures for accomplishing this business, so interesting to the unhappy officers and men in general Howe's hands, and to the cause of humanity.—There are some other matters, as you will discover, which I could not enter upon.

The situation of the affairs of the army has not till lately made it convenient to go into the inquiry directed by the resolve of the twenty-eighth of November, of the losses of the Forts Montgomery and Clinton in the state of New-York, and

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of Fort-Mifflin on Delaware. With respect to the two former, it happens that almost all the principal officers acting in that quarter were in some way or other so far concerned in the affair, as to make them improper for prosecuting the inquiry. I therefore propose to send officers from this army. If his health will permit, I should wish general M'Dougall to preside. His thorough knowledge of those posts and all their connections qualifies him in a peculiar manner for the purpose. I have written to him on the subject.

With respect to Fort-Mifflin, the inquiry involves very extensive considerations, and, more or less, affects almost all the general officers in this army, whose advice and concurrence in the measures taken make them in some degree parties. The mode, in my opinion, most unexceptionable, to be pursued, is for Congress to authorise a committee of their own body, or to delegate any other persons they may chuse to entrust, not connected with the operations of this army, to go into the business.

February 14.—Your several favors of the seventh, and that of the eighth instant, were duly received yesterday evening.—As soon as circumstances will admit, I shall appoint a court-martial in the case directed, and shall notify the parties concerned of the same.—The oath, which Congress have prescribed to be taken by the officers of the army, I shall publish in general orders, and the mode how it is to be done, with directions about the certificates.—I shall extend colonel Dyer's furlough to the first of April, as required.

I have the honor to be, &c. G. W.

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SIR, *Head-Quarters, Valley Forge, February 27, 1778.*

I AM now to acknowledge the honor of your several favors of the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twenty-first instant, which, with their respective inclosures, have been duly received.

In compliance with the resolution of Congress of the fifth instant, transmitted in your letter of the seventh, I was about to take measures for appointing a court-martial and bringing on the trials which they direct. But on recurring to the papers you were pleased to send me, I do not find that the committee have made any particular charges against the officers who are to be the objects of trial. It was probably the intention of Congress that these charges should be laid by me. But as I might err in doing it, and not fully correspond with their

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views in the matter,—especially as it would require considerable time and thought to make myself sufficiently acquainted with it from the papers collected,—I should think it would be most advisable for Congress to state explicitly the charges they wish to have exhibited against the officers respectively; and then the business may be proceeded on with propriety.

Besides the above reasons which operate generally against my exhibiting the charges,—in the particular instance of general Schuyler, it is impossible for me to do it, as I do not know what instructions he had received from Congress from time to time as to the objects of his command, nor precisely what these were. These appear to me necessary to be known, and essential to carry on a prosecution against him.

When Congress shall have arranged these points, and are pleased to honor me with them, I will pursue the speediest measures to bring on the trials.—The sooner this can be done, the better, as some of the parties are extremely anxious, and strongly importune it.

Baron Steuben has arrived at camp. He appears to be much of a gentleman, and, as far as I have had an opportunity of judging, a man of military knowledge, and acquainted with the world.

The inclosed extract of a letter from general Putnam will shew how great the distresses are in that quarter for want of money. He has described their necessities so fully, that it is unnecessary for me to add upon the subject; I shall only observe that his account is more than justified by many other letters, and that I am persuaded the earliest possible supply will be forwarded, that the very important and interesting works carrying on there may not be the least retarded.

I am under some embarrassments respecting the thirteenth Virginia regiment. It was raised on the west side of the Alleghany and towards Pittsburg, with assurances from the officers, it is said, that the men should not be drawn from that quarter. This circumstance, added to the disturbances by the Indians, and the exposed situation of their families, has been the cause of great desertions, and is at present the source of much uneasiness, and the more so, as part of the regiment was never marched from thence.—I think the whole should be united either here or there, and wish Congress to direct me upon the subject.—At the same time that their case, if truly represented, seems to be hard, and to merit the indulgence they claim, I would observe that the twelfth regiment from the western parts of the same state, and the eighth and twelfth Pennsylvania from the frontier

frontier counties of this, have similar pretensions, and might become uneasy, and apply for a like indulgence.

Agreeable to the directions of Congress, I shall send a major-general to Rhode-Island though the number of officers here of this rank, from one cause and another, is greatly reduced, and more so than it ought to be in point of policy.

Our loss of matrosses, the last campaign, in killed and wounded, was considerable; and it has not been a little increased this winter by desertions from colonel Proctor's corps. From these circumstances, we are very weak in this line; and I request that Congress will be pleased to order colonel Harrison's regiment of artillery to march from Virginia as early as the roads will admit, and join this army.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Valley Forge, March 7, 1778.

I TAKE the liberty of transmitting you copies of three letters from general Howe, of the fourteenth and twenty-first ultimo, and of the second instant, with their inclosures. The unhappy violation of the flag of truce has laid us under no small embarrassments, and has afforded the enemy good grounds for complaint and triumph at the same time. This however is the natural consequence, and must ever be the case, where different powers counteract each other in matters of the most delicate importance. There are some circumstances attending this affair, which it may possibly be in the power of Congress to throw light upon.—If they can, I shall be obliged by their assistance.

March 8.—In consequence of the letters which have lately passed between general Howe and myself,—particularly those of the fifth and tenth ultimo, copies of which I had the honor to transmit you in mine of the eighth, continued to the fourteenth,—I was about to send commissioners to meet those appointed by general Howe for adjusting the disputed points between us, carry into execution an exchange of prisoners, and improving the old cartel, as far as it might be practicable, for their better accommodation in future. This meeting was to be on the tenth instant: but, yesterday morning, Dunlap's paper of the fourth being put into my hands, I found that a resolution had been made the twenty-sixth of February, calling for all accounts against prisoners in our hands, and declaring that no exchange should take place, till the balance due thereon to the

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United States is discharged. Some of the states are not required to exhibit their claims till the first of June.—The time that would be taken to adjust them, and make a delivery of the prisoners, would more than exhaust all the ensuing summer.

This resolution I cannot consider as an intended infraction of my engagements with general Howe: yet its operation is diametrically opposite both to the spirit and letter of the propositions made on my part, and acceded to on his. I supposed myself fully authorized "by the instructions and intentions" of Congress to act as I did: and I now conceive that the public as well as my own personal honor and faith are pledged for the performance.

By the direction of Congress, I in the first instance stipulated with general Howe an exchange of prisoners,—officer for officer, of equal rank,—soldier for soldier,—and citizen for citizen. This agreement they have ever approved, and repeatedly declared their willingness to carry into execution.—Their resolution of the twenty-fourth of March last empowered me (on condition of general Lee being declared exchangeable) not only "*to proceed*" to the exchange of prisoners according to the principles and regulations of the cartel before agreed on, but also to enter into such further principles and regulations as should appear to me most proper and advantageous. A subsequent resolution of the sixth of June holds forth the same language, sanctions my conduct and reasonings in the negotiations about that time on the subject, and directs an adherence to them.—No event has occurred since that period, by which I could conclude there was any alteration in the views of Congress:—so far from it, that all my late letters breathing the same spirit with the former, and pointedly signifying my wish to bring about a general exchange,—if not with an express,—at least met with a tacit approbation.—General Howe at length by profession, if not in reality, is willing to perform the agreement on the conditions required by me, and confirmed by them.

It may be said, that, with whatever powers I was originally vested to negotiate an exchange, the resolution of the nineteenth of December last was an abridgment of them, so far as to annex a new condition,—the settlement and payment of accounts previous to its taking place.—I had no conception of this being the case in the present instance, however the letter may warrant the construction. Besides the common principle of preventing the inconveniencies necessarily resulting from allowing the enemy to make their payments in paper currency, I had reason to imagine that general Burgoyne's army was
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more particularly the object of the concluding clause. This interpretation I the more readily adopted; for, exclusive of the affairs of that army, I verily believed, that, from the confused defective state of our accounts relating to prisoners, there would be a considerable balance in favor of Mr. Howe. Nor was the situation of our accounts the only reason for this belief:—the prisoners in our hands, especially those westward of the Delaware, as I am informed, have been in a great measure supported by their own labor, and at the expense of the enemy, who have had agents constantly among us.—If this is the case, the reason of the resolve not applying, the effect ought not of course.

But perhaps it may be thought contrary to our interest to go into an exchange, as the enemy would derive more immediate advantage from it than we should.—This I shall not deny: but it appeared to me, that, on principles of genuine, extensive policy, independent of the considerations of compassion and justice, we were under an obligation not to elude it. I have the best evidence that an event of this kind is the general wish of the country:—I know it to be the wish of the army; and no one can doubt that it is the ardent wish of the unhappy sufferers themselves. We need only consult the tide of humanity, and the sympathies natural to those connected by the cements of blood, interest, and a common dread of evil, to be convinced that the prevailing current of sentiment demands an exchange. If the country, the army, and even the prisoners themselves, had a precise idea of our circumstances, and could be fully sensible of the disadvantages that might attend the giving our enemy a considerable reinforcement without having an equivalent; they might perhaps be willing to make a sacrifice of their feelings to the motives of policy. But they have not this knowledge, and cannot be entrusted with it; and their reasonings, of necessity, will be governed by what they feel.

Were an opinion once to be established (and the enemy and their emissaries know very well how to inculcate it, if they are furnished with a plausible pretext), that we designedly avoided an exchange, it would be a cause of dissatisfaction and disgust to the country and to the army,—of resentment and desperation to our captive officers and soldiers:—to say nothing of the importance of not hazarding our national character but upon the most solid grounds, especially in our embryo state, from the influence it may have on our affairs abroad,—it may not be a little dangerous to beget in the minds of our own country-

men a suspicion that we do not pay the strictest observance to the maxims of honor and good faith.

It is prudent to use the greatest caution not to shock the notions of general justice and humanity, universal among mankind as well in a public as a private view. In a business on the side of which the passions are so much concerned as in the present, men would be readily disposed to believe the worst, and cherish the most unfavorable conclusions. Were the letters that have passed between general Howe and myself from first to last, and the proceedings of Congress on the same subject, to be published with proper comments, it is much to be feared,—if the exchange should be deferred till the terms of the last resolve were fulfilled,—that it would be difficult to prevent our being generally accused with a breach of good faith. Perhaps it might be said, that, while the enemy refused us justice, we fondly embraced the opportunity to be loud, persevering, incessant in our claims; but the moment they were willing to render it, we receded from ourselves, and started new difficulties.—This, I say, might be the reasoning of speculative minds; and they might consider all our professions as *mere* professions; or, at best, that interest and policy were to be the only arbiters of their validity.

Imputations of this nature would have a tendency to unnerve our operations, by diminishing that respect and confidence which are essential to be placed in those who are at the head of affairs, either in the civil or military line. This, added to the prospect of hopeless captivity, would be a great discouragement to the service. The ill consequences of both would be immense, by increasing the causes of discontent in the army, which are already too numerous, and many of which are in a great measure unavoidable,—by fortifying that unwillingness which already appears too great, towards entering into the service, and of course impeding the progress both of draughting and recruiting,—by dejecting the courage of the soldiery, from an apprehension of the horrors of captivity,—and finally by reducing those, whose lot it is to drink the bitter cup, to a despair which can only find relief by renouncing their attachments and engaging with their captors. These effects have already been experienced in part from the obstacles that have lain in the way of exchanges: but, if these obstacles were once to seem the result of system, they would become ten-fold.—Nothing has operated more disagreeably upon the minds of the militia than the fear of captivity, on the footing it has hitherto stood.—

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What would be their reasonings, if it should be thought to stand upon a worse?

If a present temporary interest is to be a ruling principle, it is easy to prove that an exchange can never take place. The constitution of our army in respect to the term of service for which our men engage, and the dependence we are obliged to place on the militia, must forever operate against us in exchanges, and forbid an equality of advantages. Should it be said that there are times when it might be more peculiarly unequal and injurious, and that the present is such on account of the weak condition of our army,—I answer that the delay necessarily involved in the previous negotiation on the subject, in delivering the prisoners from time to time in small numbers and receiving others in their stead, and the mode of delivery at different places, will nearly bring the matter to the point we could wish, and give us leisure to reinforce this army (if it is to be done at all), so as to obviate in a great measure the ill consequences apprehended.

But if the argument of interest on a partial scale be pursued as far as it will go, not only the general consideration thrown out above, but special ones apposite to every situation, will present themselves, that we ought not to exchange:—now we ought not, because our army is weak!—when the season is more advanced, and it is time for the campaign to open, we ought not, because our army may be strong, and it will be our business to avail ourselves of our own strength and the enemy's weakness, to strike some decisive blow!—if they, by the protection of their shipping and impregnable works, should be able to baffle our attempts till the period of reinforcements from Europe arrive, it will surely then not be our interest to add numbers and strength to an enemy already sufficiently numerous and strong!—Thus, by a parity of reasoning, the golden æra will never come, which is to relieve the miseries of captivity. Our service must become odious: those who are out of it will endeavor to keep so; and those who are in it will wish to get out of it: every prisoner the enemy makes will be his soldier rather than submit to a rigorous and despairing confinement.

If we do not seize the present propitious moment when the necessities of the enemy press them to reasonable terms, to form and establish a liberal cartel, it is not impossible, in the vicissitudes and reverses of war, that a time may come when we should wish we had embraced it, and interest may strongly impel the enemy to decline it, except on the most unequal conditions.

tions. True policy, as well as good faith, in my opinion, binds us to improve the occasion.

There are however some ambiguities in general Howe's conduct, which require explanation, and ought to put us upon our guard.—I determined to make the affair of citizens,—viz. to procure an exemption from captivity for them, if possible,—or, if not, (since it cannot now be demanded as a matter of right) to fix their exchangeability upon the easiest and most unequivocal foundation.—an indispensable preliminary to any further procedure; and at the same time to secure the exchange of general Lee and all other officers who have been the particular objects of exception.

The interview intended between general Howe's commissioners and those on our part on the tenth instant is now postponed. I cannot doubt that Congress, in preservation of the public faith and my personal honor, will remove all impediments that now oppose themselves to my engagements, and that they will authorise me, through commissioners appointed for the purpose, to negotiate a more extensive and competent cartel, upon such principles as may appear advantageous and founded in necessity,—any resolutions heretofore to the contrary notwithstanding; and I must request that they will favor me with their answer by the earliest opportunity.

The work, from its nature, will be difficult. Two parties are concerned, whose interests are more than opposite in a common view.—We shall endeavor to act for the best, and to promote the public service as far as possible, though we may not be able to answer the expectations of all. But it should be remembered, that, although general Howe's want of men affords a prospect of favorable terms, yet he will not be disposed to sacrifice to it all considerations of general advantage in a contract of such a nature; and it is not even to be hoped that it can take place except on principles of mutual benefit.

I persuade myself that the freedom I have taken in delivering my sentiments so fully upon this occasion will readily be excused, as it proceeds from a desire to place the motives of my conduct in a just point of view, and from an opinion of duty that led me to a free discussion of a subject, which considered in all its lights, will appear to comprehend consequences of the first delicacy and magnitude.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

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OFFICIAL LETTERS.

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SIR,

Head-Quarters, Valley-Forge, March 9, 1778.

I HAVE been this day favored with yours of the twenty-seventh of February, and of the second, third, and fourth instant, which I shall answer in their order.

The removal of so valuable a train of field artillery from Albany to Farmington, as to a place of greater security, was certainly a measure highly proper; and you may be assured that every precaution shall be taken to escort them safely through Jersey to this camp, when it is thought advisable to bring them hither.

You mistook the intent of mine of the eighteenth of February. I did not mean to give you the trouble of making a return of the British officers who were exchanged after the convention. General Reidesel, as I informed you wrote to me to obtain liberty for him to make an exchange of some of his suite and other foreign officers, as that liberty had been allowed to the British. I did not chuse to give him any answer until I had applied to you, that I might know whether you had any reason for making such distinction: and as you misapprehended me, I shall still be obliged to defer answering him till I hear from you.—I think, considering the great number of officers of ours who are in captivity, it is our interest to exchange as many of their officers, prisoners under the convention, as we can.

Commissioners from me are to meet others from general Howe on the thirty-first of this month, to endeavor to settle a general exchange of prisoners.—Until we know the issue of the negotiation, it will be hardly worth while to alter the situation of the prisoners in Lancaster county.

On the twenty-seventh of February I had occasion to write to Congress, on the subject of yours of the third. It was occasioned by a representation from the colonel of the thirteenth Virginia regiment which was raised (as colonel M'Kay's and Cooke's were) to remain upon the frontier. Were this the case with only one regiment, I should not hesitate, considering the face of affairs to the westward, to order it immediately to Fort-Pitt or the neighborhood. But the eighth and twelfth Pennsylvania, and the twelfth and thirteenth Virginia, all claim the same right; and if the indulgence is granted to one, the others will be dissatisfied: and to spare them all at this time is impossible.

To regain the deserters from those regiments is certainly a very desirable thing; and the mode you point out is the most probable.

probable. But I fear, if those men who are now here find that the deserters are not to be brought down to join their regiments in camp, that they may be induced to go off, in hopes of obtaining the same terms. I confess I am much embarrassed by this matter, and shall be exceedingly glad to have the advice and assistance of Congress and the board upon the subject, before I come to any determination. It is an evil that will ever result from enlistments for local purposes, when it is not convenient to abide by the agreement.

I shall immediately transmit the papers, inclosed in yours of the fourth, to general Howe.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

P. S. Several instances having occurred, in which officers have drawn clothing from the clothier-general, not being entitled to it,—I shall be glad, if any applications are made to the board in future, that they will never give orders to any but such as bring testimonials from the brigadier or officer commanding the brigade they belong to.—Some who have resigned have taken up clothing on their return home.

SIR,

Valley-Forge, March 12, 1778.

ON sunday night I had the honor to receive your favors of the first and fifth instant, with their inclosures.

I am happy to find that my past conduct respecting citizens, in the correspondence between general Howe and myself, is approved by Congress. They may rest assured that their rights are strongly impressed on my mind; and that, in all my transactions, every support in my power shall be given them. I know their importance; and, in my expected negotiations with general Howe, if possible, I will exempt citizens from captivity. However I cannot hope to effect it, as I cannot demand it as a matter of right, since Congress themselves, in their original resolve directing a proposition to be made for the exchange of prisoners, mentioned that of citizens,—which implied a right of capturing them.

They may be assured that general Lee will not be forgotten. He has all along been a principal object in dispute: and, so far from doing any thing injurious to him, his right to be exchanged, and his releasement, are intended to be placed upon the most explicit, unambiguous footing.—Indeed, from the spirit of general Howe's letters collectively taken, since his agreement to enlarge the officers on parole in the first instance, and his extension

tenison of it in the exchange,—though they are not free from ambiguities,—it may be inferred, that, on sending in lieutenant-colonel Campbell and the Hessian field-officers captured at Trenton, an exchange of all officers will immediately commence. It seems to be a point with him that it shall begin with them, as they have been longest in captivity.—I have taken the liberty to inclose you copies of three letters which have just passed between general Howe and myself, more particularly concerning general Lee, in which I have pushed matters respecting him as far as I thought it prudent at this time.—Every precaution will certainly be used to prevent the enemy gaining any advantage in the exchange of prisoners.

With great deference, I would take the liberty to observe that Congress seemed to have carried the preamble of their resolve of the twenty-sixth ultimo, prohibiting the enlisting, &c. prisoners and deserters, too far; and, through accident, to have recited a fact that has never happened (at least to my knowledge), and which is injurious to us,—viz. that prisoners had been enlisted by us. If any have, it is what I never knew. However, be this as it may, if the resolution has not been published, I could wish the preamble to be altered, and only to recite, "*that experience, &c. in deserters*" only. The resolution itself may stand as it does, comprehending a prohibition against the enlistment of both.

My reason for troubling Congress upon this occasion is,—we have always complained against general Howe, and still do, for obliging and permitting the prisoners in his hands to enlist, as an unwarrantable procedure, and wholly repugnant to the spirit at least of the cartel. This preamble seems to admit the practice on our part, which would certainly justify it in him, and is such evidence as must silence us in future (should it stand), and afford him an opportunity for recrimination,—though, as I have suggested, I believe no prisoners have ever been enlisted by us,—I am sure, none have through compulsion.

I have the pleasure to transmit you an extract of a letter from captain Barry, which will inform you of his successes. The two ships he burned after stripping them; and he was obliged, it seems, two days after the capture, to ground and abandon the schooner, after a long and severe engagement with some of the enemy's frigates and smaller armed vessels.—It is said he saved her guns and most of her tackle.

I also take the liberty to lay before Congress copies of letters from messieurs Champion, Wadsworth, and Reed. From
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the uniformity of sentiment held forth by these gentlemen, it is much to be feared the measures lately adopted by the commisioners at New-haven, for regulating the prices of provision, will have a disagreeable effect upon our supplies of meat.—How far it may be practicable to suspend their operation for a time, I cannot determine: but, if it can be done, it appears we should experience many advantages from it. It is a matter of great importance; and as such, is submitted to Congress for their consideration.—If any thing can be done to procure supplies of provision, particularly of the salt kind, I should suppose, and am persuaded, it will not be omitted.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, March 14, 1778.

THIS will be presented to you by count Pulaski, who, from a conviction that his remaining at the head of the cavalry was a constant subject of uneasiness to the principal officers of that corps, has been induced to resign his command. Waving a minute inquiry into the causes of dissatisfaction,—which may be reduced perhaps to the disadvantages under which he labored, as a stranger not well acquainted with the language, genius and manners of this country,—it may be sufficient to observe that the degree of harmony which is inseparable from the well-being and consequent utility of a corps, has not subsisted in the cavalry since his appointment, and that the most effectual as well as the easiest remedy is that which he has generously applied.

The count however, far from being disgusted with the service, is led by his thirst of glory, and zeal for the cause of liberty, to solicit farther employment, and waits upon the Congress to make his proposals. They are briefly that he be allowed to raise an independent corps composed of sixty-eight horse and two hundred foot,—the horse to be armed with lances, and the foot equipped in the manner of light infantry. The former he thinks he can readily fill with natives of good character and worthy the trust reposed in them. With respect to the other, he is desirous of more latitude, so as to have liberty of engaging prisoners and deserters from the enemy.

The original plan for the lance-men was to have draughted them from the regiments of horse. But, as this method would produce a clashing of interests and perhaps occasion new disturbances, the count prefers having a corps totally unconnected with

with any other. My advice to him, therefore, is to enlist his number of cavalry with the continental bounty; and, if it should be found consonant to the views of Congress to allow his raising the number proposed over and above the establishment for the horse, then he would have them on the footing of an independent corps: if not, he might at all events have them as draughts; and in this case there would be no ground for complaint.

With regard to the infantry, which the count esteems essential to the success of the cavalry, I have informed him that the enlisting deserters and prisoners is prohibited by a late resolve of Congress.—How far Congress might be inclined to make an exception, and license the engaging prisoners in a particular detached corps, in which such characters may be admitted with less danger than promiscuously in the line,—I cannot undertake to pronounce.

I have only to add that the count's valor and active zeal on all occasions have done him great honor; and, from a persuasion, that, by being less exposed to the inconveniences which he has hitherto experienced, he will render great services with such a command as he asks for, I wish him to succeed in his application.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

P. S. It is to be understood that the count expects to retain his rank as brigadier, and, I think, is entitled to it from his general character and particular disinterestedness on the present occasion.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, Valley-Forge, March 16, 1778.

I HAVE the honor to transmit you a letter from governor Clinton which he inclosed to me for my perusal and consideration.—The inconvenience he mentions, as resulting from the resolve respecting the appointment of a commandant for Forts Montgomery and Clinton, requires to be obviated. I do not conceive it to have been the design of Congress to make the command of those forts altogether distinct and independent on the general command of the posts in that quarter; but only to designate the rank of the officer who should have the immediate charge of them.

There is such an intimate connexion between the forts and the other posts and passes in the Highlands and their vicinity, that it is necessary for one officer to have the superintendency

and control of the whole, and to be answerable for all. If this were not to be the case, but the command were not to be divided, there might want that co-operation between the garrisons and the troops without, which might be essential to their preservation and to the common purposes of defence. The assigning a fixed number of men to the garrisons would not remove this inconvenience; for the co-operation would still be necessary. But if it were otherwise, I should not think the measure advisable, because we do not know what number of men we may have in the field next campaign; and the number for the defence of the Highlands must be proportioned to the general strength; and the force of the garrisons, to that number.

On these considerations, having ordered general M'Dougal to repair to the Highlands to assume the chief command there, I have comprehended the forts among the other objects of his trust; in the discharge of which, I am persuaded he will manifest adequate zeal and ability. But as the resolve in question affords room for doubt, it will be proper to have it explained, so as more explicitly to ascertain the intention of Congress.

I am perfectly in sentiment with governor Clinton on the propriety of drawing the troops from the northward to reinforce and carry on the works in the Highlands. From every thing I can learn, there seems to be no prospect of prosecuting the intended expedition into Canada. If so, I apprehend it can answer no valuable end to keep a body of troops in and about Albany.—In the present circumstances of Canada, little is to be dreaded thence: the enemy, in all probability, will be well satisfied to act on the defensive, without risking the consequences of an attempt against us. A proper garrison at Fort-Schuyler, and a small party by way of guard at Albany, with the militia of the country that may be occasionally drawn together, will be a sufficient security against the inroads from the enemy from Canada, or the depredations of the neighbouring Indians, supposing there were any of the tribes whose dispositions were still actively hostile notwithstanding our late northern successes,—which is by no means a natural supposition.—All the men, more than are wanted for these purposes, would be of the most important utility in the Highlands.

If the arms and stores at Albany should be thought an objection to the plan, I would beg leave to observe that Albany appears to me a most improper place for stationary arsenals or magazines, and that those which are there at present should be

be removed without delay. Besides, as they would be in most danger from an incursion up the North-river, the best way to counteract that danger is to strengthen the passes in the Highlands, and obstruct the navigation; in order to which the reinforcing them with the troops from the northward would be no inconsiderable step.—With the greatest respect, I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Valley Forge, March 16, 1778.

THIS will be delivered to you by captain Sullivan, who waits on Congress upon the subject of pay and the loss of his rank in the line of the Massachusetts officers.—He is one of the gentlemen, who, in going with major Sherburne to relieve the post we had at the cedars in 1776, after a brave and gallant conduct, fell into the enemy's hands. In a few days after, on the treaty which general Arnold made, he generously offered himself, as I have been informed, and went one of the hostages to Quebec, for the performance of it.

By some means the state of Massachusetts-Bay has not continued him in their line, nor has he any appointment in the army. He is now on parole, through the indulgence of general Carleton, and has applied to me for pay and rations from the time of his return: and considering also the deprivation of his rank as hard and injurious, he hopes he will be provided for in a suitable manner, and according to that standing which he formerly held in the army.

Captain Sullivan's wishes, in either instance, cannot be answered by me.—As to the first, the resolution of the nineteenth of January, regulating the pay of prisoners (which is the only rule for my government) seems to have drawn the line between officers on parole who are continued in service, and those who are not; and, making that the only criterion to fix pay, to have precluded every other discrimination: and the powers, which were vested in the respective states to appoint officers, prohibit any interference by me in his favor, as to the latter.

I have stated the nature of the captain's claims, and the reasons which are opposed to his obtaining relief in either instance from me. I shall only add that the neglect by the states (in their appointments) of the officers who were in captivity, where there was no other objection to them, was at least ungenerous, if not impolitic and unjust. It has been the case in many instances: and as to the gentleman who is particularly the subject of

of this letter, the testimonials that have been given of his character as an officer were much in his favor, and greatly to his honor.

By accident, the resolution of the nineteenth of January, alluded to above, has been mislaid. I must trouble you with a request for another copy of it.

I transmit Congress colonel * * * 's application to resign. As general Huntington, in whose brigade he is, and in whom I have the utmost confidence, is perfectly willing, I have only to say upon the occasion that I have not the smallest objection to the measure.

General Sullivan set out for Rhode-Island on friday last, to take the command there in consequence of the resolution of Congress directing me to send a major-general there for that purpose. Supposing general Greene in the quarter-master line, I have now only one major-general left in camp.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR, *Head-Quarters, Valley-Forge, March 17, 1778.*

ON saturday I had the honor to receive your favor of the tenth, with the resolutions alluded to.

Inclosed I take the liberty to transmit an extract of a letter just received from general Parsons.—This, as well as the letter which I inclosed you yesterday from governor Clinton, will shew the confusion in the management of affairs on the North-river. I informed Congress then that I had sent general M'Dougal to take the chief command there, comprehending the forts.—which appeared to me the only effectual means for curing all disorders, and promoting the public service.—To remove all impediments, it were to be wished that Congress would invest him with every necessary power for carrying into execution the objects of his command: and it might be well if they were to extend to any future commanding officer, as it would prevent those difficulties which have heretofore arisen from their having been considered as merely personal.

I am more and more in sentiment with governor Clinton on the propriety and absolute necessity of drawing the troops from the northward, to reinforce and carry on the works in the Highlands. From the information I have from colonel Radiere who has just come from thence, I find that the intended defences are far less advanced than I had any idea of. According to him, little or nothing is yet done, though I have repeatedly and constantly

stantly urged the prosecution of them with all possible industry. The inclosed copies of my letters to general Putnam will shew that I have uniformly pressed the closest attention to the business,—though it might be inferred from general Parsons's letter that there had been some inconsistency in my orders. There remains but a little time to do a great deal in; and I fear that no exertions now will be sufficient to place things in that quarter on the secure and respectable footing we could wish. However, we should do the most we can: and if the works can not be as complete as they ought, the troops will be there; and a reliance must be had in their bravery, to repel any attempt that may be formed against them.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, March 18, 1778.

I HAVE the honor of transmitting yon the inclosed letter from general Smallwood, giving intelligence of the enemy's motions on the Delaware, and his conjectures respecting their object. The account he has heard of troops being on board the vessels is confirmed by the relations of deserters and others, who agree that a considerable number of men have been embarked, and add that they took seventeen days' provision with them. From this circumstance it is scarcely to be imagined that they are ordered on a sea voyage. The proportion of small vessels in the fleet makes it probable they have in view to collect forage, or attempt the destruction of the salt-works; and both these ideas are favored by accounts from the city.—As soon as their intentions are certainly known, they shall be communicated. In the mean time, I have the honor to be, with the greatest respect, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, Valley-Forge, March 21, 1778.

I HAVE the honor of yours of the fourteenth and fifteenth instant. In consequence of the resolves transmitted to me, I have dispatched an express to the marquis De la Fayette and baron De Kalb, to recal them from the northward: and, instead of ordering down Hazen's regiment to rejoin this army, I have ordered Van Schaick's immediately to the Highlands, where the public works are in a manner at a stand for want of hands. Van Schaick's is a full and fresh regiment,—Hazen's

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but weak in point of numbers, and must be considerably fatigued from their late long march. * * *

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Valley Forge, March 24, 1778.

HEREWITH I do myself the honor to inclose copies of a letter from an officer of militia in Elizabethtown, to me, and an extract of a letter from one of Mr. Boudinot's deputies at Boston, to him,—both tending to induce a belief that the enemy have some enterprize in contemplation. What this is, time must discover.—I have this whole winter been clearly of opinion that general Howe's movements would be very early this spring, to take advantage of the weak state of our army,—or late, if he expected considerable reinforcements from England, and meant to avail himself of his full strength. If the first takes place, as appearances indicate, it may, I think, be considered as a proof of one or both of these two things,—that he is either well informed (he cannot indeed be otherwise) of the situation, and more than probably, of the strength of our army,—or that he expects no considerable reinforcements this year from Europe. In either case it is our indispensable duty to reinforce and arrange our army as speedily as possible, that we may in the first instance be prepared for defence,—in the second, take advantage of any favorable circumstance which may happen, to injure the enemy.

Whatever may be the designs of Congress with respect to the establishment of the army, I know not: but I do most earnestly and devoutly recommend a speedy adoption of them, and the appointment of officers, as our present situation at this advanced season is truly alarming, and to me highly distressing, as I am convinced that we shall be plunged into the campaign before our arrangements are made, and the army properly organized.

The numberless disadvantages resulting from the late appointment of general officers last year, make me look forward with infinite anxiety, this:—for, after all the wisdom that Congress or their committee can use in the choice of officers, many will be disgusted: resignations of some and perhaps non-acceptance of others will follow. Before matters then can be brought to a proper tone, much time will be lost, and a great deal of trouble and vexation encountered,—to overcome which, is not the work of a day: and, till they are overcome, confusion, disorder, and loss, must prevail. In the mean while, order, regularity,
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and discipline, which require the vigilance of every officer to establish, and must flow from the general officers in every army, —are neglected, or not entered upon in time, to effect. Thus it happened last year, and brigades and divisions became vacant, to the great injury of the service.

As it is not improper for Congress to have some idea of the present temper of the army, it may not be amiss to remark in this place, that, since the month of August last, between two and three hundred officers have resigned their commissions, and many others were with difficulty dissuaded from it. In the Virginia line only, not less than six colonels, as good as any in the service, have left it lately; and more, I am told, are in the humor to do so.

Highly advantageous also would it be, if the recruits and draughts from North-Carolina and Virginia were not suffered to halt on their way to camp under pretence of getting equipped, but sent forward and incorporated into the different regiments of their respective states as soon as it could be done. Out of the number of men said to be draughted in Virginia last fall, and others from North-Carolina, very few have joined the army; but, owing to desertion and other causes, they have dwindled to nothing: and this will always be the case with new recruits, especially those who are unwillingly drawn forth, if much time is spent in getting them to their regiments under the care of proper officers. This shews the necessity (if the season and other powerful reasons did not loudly call for it) of hastening them to the army.

My solicitude for the preservation of the communication of the North-river gives me very uneasy sensations on account of our posts there, and will excuse my again asking if the troops to the northward, except such as are necessary for the defence of Fort-Schuyler, can be so advantageously employed as at the works on that river.—A respectable force at those posts would awe New-York, and divide general Howe's force or expose the city.—To depend too much upon militia, is, in my opinion, putting every thing to hazard.

If I should appear uncommonly anxious respecting the several matters contained in this letter, by repeating them,—Congress will do me the justice, I hope, to believe that I am actuated by no views but such as are prompted by circumstances and the advanced season.—With the greatest respect, I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

P. S. Your letter of the twenty-first instant is just come to hand, containing several resolves of Congress.

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SIR,

Valley-Forge, March 24, 1778.

COLONEL Charles Lewis of the fourteenth Virginia regiment will have the honor to deliver you this. He waits on Congress to resign his commission. I have interested myself, but in vain, to retain him in the service, and have only to add my regret at the loss of so good an officer.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, Valley-Forge, March 29, 1778.

I HAVE been honored with yours of the twenty-fifth, inclosing duplicates of two former resolves of Congress, and a resolve of the twenty-third instant, accepting the resignation of colonel Charles Webb.

Since mine of the twenty-fourth, Mr. Boudinot has communicated the following intelligence, being part of a letter to him:—"I have lately received some intelligence from New-York, that we may make ourselves easy in Jersey, as all the force that can be spared is to be sent to join general Howe.—Two thousand five hundred are actually on board transports, and lying at the watering place."

I have this day received a letter from general Smallwood, dated yesterday at Wilmington, in which he says—"The enemy, about four days ago, had a fleet of near fifty sail standing up the river, which I fancy was from New-York; and, yesterday their foraging fleet went up without touching upon this side the Delaware, except three or four small parties about Port-Penn, who have been constantly drove off by a party of about a hundred of our men, who have been guarding and aiding the removal of the forage, which is at length happily effected."

A Philadelphia paper of the twenty-seventh also mentions, that a fleet of upwards of forty sail had left the Hook on Sunday, and that they were said to be in the river.

From all the above circumstances, I have no doubt but the troops have arrived from New-York.—I have heard nothing farther from Rhode-Island since I wrote to you last.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

Head

Sir,

Head-Quarters, Valley-Forge, April 1, 1778.

SINCE I had the honor of addressing you upon the twenty-ninth ultimo, I have not been able to learn with any precision whether the transports that arrived brought any considerable number of troops.—A Hessian deserter says there were only a few German convalescents on board. If so, the fleet with two thousand five hundred, mentioned in my last, is not arrived, supposing they were bound to Philadelphia.

General St. Clair arrived yesterday from Boston: and, as he seems very anxious to have his matter determined one way or the other, I beg leave to recal the attention of Congress to my letter of the twenty-seventh of February upon that subject.—Having received ~~no~~ information since that time which serves to direct my judgment as to the charges which it will be proper to exhibit against general St. Clair, I have only again to request that Congress or the committee will be pleased to point out the particular charges upon which the court shall proceed.

I could wish this matter might not be delayed, on several accounts. General St. Clair is in a very delicate situation, and feels it sensibly. He was kept inactive great part of last campaign, and probably will be the whole of this, except his trial can be shortly brought on,—as it will be almost impossible to find time to hold a court after the scene of action opens.—If he should be acquitted, he would render very essential service, especially at this time when we have so few general officers: if condemned, his place may be immediately filled. It will besides take him some little time to prepare for his defence after he knows the particular charges alledged against him.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

Sir,

Head-Quarters, Valley-Forge, April 3, 1778.

CAPTAIN Lee of the light dragoons, and the officers under his command, having uniformly distinguished themselves by a conduct of exemplary zeal, prudence, and bravery, I took occasion, on a late signal instance of it, to express the high sense I entertained of their merit, and to assure him that it should not fail of being properly noticed. I was induced to give this assurance from a conviction that it is the wish of Congress to give every encouragement to merit, and that they would cheerfully embrace so favorable an opportunity of manifesting this disposition.

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I had it in contemplation at the time, in case no other method more eligible could be adopted, to make him an offer of a place in my family. I have consulted the committee of Congress upon the subject, and we were mutually of opinion that the giving captain Lee the command of two troops of horse on the proposed establishment, with the rank of major, to act as an independent partisan corps, would be a mode of rewarding him, very advantageous to the service. Captain Lee's genius particularly adapts him to a command of this nature; and it will be the most agreeable to him, of any station in which he could be placed.

I beg leave to recommend this measure to Congress, and shall be obliged by their decision as speedily as may be convenient. The campaign is fast approaching, and there will probably be very little time to raise and prepare the corps for it. It is a part of the plan to give Mr. Lindsay the command of the second troop, and to make Mr. Peyton captain-lieutenant of the first.

I am with the highest respect and esteem, &c. G. W.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, Valley-Forge, April 4, 1778.

I HAVE now the honor to acknowledge your several letters of the twenty-first, twenty-ninth, and thirtieth ultimo, with their inclosures, which have been duly received.—It gives me pain to observe they appear to contain several implications by which my sensibility is not a little wounded.—I find myself extremely embarrassed by the steps I had taken towards an exchange of prisoners and the formation of a general cartel making more ample provision for their future accommodation and relief. The views of Congress seem to be very different from what I supposed them when I entered into my late engagements with general Howe: their resolution of the thirtieth ultimo, pointedly requiring a strict adherence to all former ones upon the subject, will in all probability render them impracticable.—I considered some of their resolutions as dictated on the principle of retaliation, and did not imagine the terms they contained would be insisted upon in negotiating an agreement calculated to remedy the evil which occasioned them. In most respects they might be substantially complied with: but there are some points to which an exact conformity must of necessity destroy the idea of a cartel. One is the obliging the enemy to pay gold and silver on equal terms for continental currency,

cy, estimating the articles supplied them at their actual prices with us, as seems to be the design of the resolve of the nineteenth of December.—Another is the subjecting the inhabitants of these states, taken in arms against them, to trial and punishment, agreeable to the resolve of the thirtieth of the same month.

I am well aware that appearances ought to be upheld, and that we should avoid as much as possible recognising by any public act the depreciation of our currency; but I conceive this end would be answered as far as might be necessary, by stipulating that all money payments should be made in gold and silver, being the common medium of commerce among nations, at the rate of four shillings and sixpence for a Spanish milled dollars, &c.—by fixing the price of rations on an equitable scale relatively to our respective circumstances,—and providing for the payment of what we may owe, by sending in provision, and selling it at their market. The rates of money, and the prices of provisions and other commodities, differ every where: and, in treaties of a similar nature between any two states, it is requisite, for mutual convenience, to ascertain some common ratio both for the value of money in payments, and for the rates of those articles on which they may arise.

It was determined on mature consideration not to conclude any thing expressly that should contradict the resolution of the thirtieth December: but at the same time, if it is designed to be the rule of practice, it is easy to perceive it would at once overturn any cartel that could be formed. General Howe would never consent to observe it on his part, if such a practice were to exist on ours.—Though the law ought not to be contravened by an express article admitting the exchangeability of such persons, yet, if it is not suffered to sleep, it is in vain to expect the operation of it will be acquiesced in by the enemy.

The measures I have taken must evince that it is my determination to pay the fullest attention to the interests of citizens, and to the rights of general Lee, in the treaty: and I think it but justice to the gentlemen appointed to negotiate it, to declare that I know them to be so fully impressed with the importance of both those objects, as to make them cheerfully observant of the injunctions of Congress, so far as not to conclude any agreement of which the exchange of general Lee and the alternative respecting citizens are not essential parts.—These points had been early determined on.

It is with no small concern that I have been obliged to trouble Congress upon the subjects of this letter: and, should they

appear

appear to them in the same light they do to me, and they should think proper to remove the obstacles which now oppose the business in hand, I must request they will be pleased to communicate their determination as expeditiously as possible, that the commissioners may govern themselves accordingly and either proceed to forming a cartel, or put an end to the negotiation.—Before the resolves of the thirteenth came to hand, they had met, and been in treaty two days, with a prospect of a favorable accommodation.

I am happy to inform Congress that general Lee will be out on parole to-morrow in place of general Prescott: and I have every reason to expect, if the negotiation can be continued upon admissible terms, that his exchange will immediately follow the releasement of colonel Campbell and the Hessian field-officers. It is agreed that lieutenant-colonel Allen shall be exchanged for lieutenant-colonel Campbell.

The importunate applications of colonel Lee and major Swazey to leave the service oblige me to lay the matter before Congress. Colonel Lee's letter upon the subject was transmitted me the twenty-fifth of January: but, hoping he might change his mind, I deferred writing to Congress upon his request. He has renewed it again in urgent terms, through general Heath, and I have only to observe that it is a painful circumstance to see officers of their merit leaving the service.—It is the case every day.—I shall be obliged by Congress informing me of the dates of the resignations of the colonels in the Virginia line:—I have only received the date of colonel Lewis's.

Inclosed is a letter from captain Cotteneau of the ship Ferdinand, with an invoice of her cargo. The letter only came to hand yesterday: and, as it is of an old date, it is highly probable that the goods are sold. If they are not,—from the captain's desire to give the public a preference in the sale, Congress will have an opportunity of directing them to be purchased. Most of them would be proper for the army.

I have the honor to be, &c. G. W.

To the Committee for the Affairs of the Army.

GENTLEMEN,

Head-Quarters, April 9, 1778.

BY a resolve of Congress, the appointment of officers to the corps which brigadier-general count Pulaski is authorized to raise, has been referred to your decision in conjunction with me.

As I know the superior confidence which a commandant places in officers of his own choice, I have given him my approbation of the gentlemen whom he has nominated, and it remains with you to decide in their favor, or have others substituted. I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Valley-Forge, April 10, 1778.

I HAVE had the honor of receiving your favor of the fourth instant, inclosing a resolve of Congress, of the same date, empowering me to call forth five thousand militia from the States of Maryland, Pennsylvania, and New-Jersey. I thank Congress for the power: at the same time it is incumbent on me to assure them, that,—granting the practicability of collecting such a number,—it would prove a work of time, difficulty, and expense; to evince which, I need only recur to the experience of last campaign on similar occasions, and to remind you that it was not possible to obtain a thousand men, nor sometimes even one hundred, from this State, although the former number was required and promised, for the purpose of covering during the winter the country between Schuylkill and Delaware.

As this resolve appears to have been made in consequence of my letters of the twenty-fourth and twenty-ninth ultimo, which were founded on conjecture, and, in some degree, misinformation,—and as the execution of it would, exclusive of the inconveniences abovementioned, I am persuaded have a tendency to injure the completion of the continental regiments,—I shall call for a small part only of the number allowed; but could wish that Hartley's regiment were ordered immediately to camp, and the duties of it performed by militia. In like manner, I would propose that all remote guards should be composed of militia, and that the several purposes for which men are drawn from the continental troops should be answered by them. This would be a means of drawing together a considerable number of men who are in a manner lost to the army, and of employing the militia to the best advantage possible.

The great end of my letter to Congress of the twenty-fourth ultimo, seems to have been mistaken. My views were not returned to reinforcements of militia. To know whether the old establishment of the army, or the new as agreed upon by the committee, is the choice of Congress,—and in what manner the regiments

regiments of this state and the additional are to be reduced, officers for the whole appointed, &c. were my objects. These are objects of the greatest moment, as they may, in their consequences, involve the fate of America; for I will undertake to say, that it is next to impossible, when the season is so far advanced, properly to accomplish those changes, appointments, and the dependent arrangements for the ensuing campaign. Should any convulsion happen, or movement take place, they will be altogether impracticable.—Justice to my own character, as well as duty to the public, constrain me to repeat these things: their consequences are more easily conceived than described.

It may be said by some, sir, that my wish to see the officers of this army upon a more respectable establishment, is the cause of my solicitude, and carries me too far.—To such I can declare that my anxiety proceeds from the causes abovementioned. If my opinion is asked with respect to the necessity of making this provision for the officers, I am ready to declare that I do most religiously believe the salvation of the cause depends upon it,—and, without it, your officers will moulder to nothing, or be composed of low and illiterate men, void of capacity for this or any other business. To prove this, I can with truth aver, that scarce a day passes, without the offer of one or two commissions; and my advices from the eastward and southward are that numbers who had gone home on furlough mean not to return, but are establishing themselves in more lucrative employments.—Let congress determine what will be the consequence of this spirit.

Personally, as an officer, I have no interest in their decision, because I have declared, and I now repeat it, that I never will receive the smallest benefit from the half-pay establishment: but, as a man who fights under the weight of a proscription, and as a citizen who wishes to see the liberty of his country established upon a permanent foundation, and whose property depends upon the success of our arms, I am deeply interested. But,—all this apart, and justice out of the question,—upon the single ground of economy and public saving, I will maintain the utility of it: for I have not the least doubt, that, until officers consider their commissions in an honorable and interested point of view, and are afraid to endanger them by negligence and inattention, no order, regularity, or care either of the men or public property, will prevail. * * *

By officers who are just returned from Massachusetts-Bay, I learn that there is not the least prospect of getting men from thence before the month of June,—if then; and indeed that there

there is no reason to expect any number that will deserve the name of reinforcement for the continental regiments this campaign,—the towns being only called upon to furnish the deficiency of their last year's quota, so that all subsequent casualties are disregarded, and the fifteen regiments from that state, which may now perhaps want four thousand men to complete them, will receive only five hundred if the towns came within that number of their complement last year.—What change the requisition of Congress, of the [twenty-sixth] of February, may effect, I shall not undertake to say:—if it has not a speedy and powerful operation, our prospects in that quarter will be exceedingly unpromising.

A gentleman from New-Hampshire some little time since informed me that matters were nearly in the same train there, notwithstanding a resolve for the completion of their battalions; and the inclosed copy of a letter (No. 1) from general Putnam, whom I have desired to remain in Connecticut for some time in order to forward the recruits from that state, conveys his ideas of what may be expected from thence. What New-York, New-Jersey, and North-Carolina have done or are about to do, I know not.—Pennsylvania and Maryland have tried the effect of voluntary enlistments to little purpose; and the first, in direct contradiction to the most pointed injunctions laid on the officers, have their recruits composed chiefly of deserters, who will embrace the first opportunity of escaping with our arms.—Virginia, it is true, has proceeded to a draught: but the number, besides being in itself inadequate, has been lessened by desertion; and the deficiency of the regiments, on the other hand, being increased by death and desertion, their strength will probably fall very far short of the new establishment.

This, sir, is not a flattering picture of our affairs: but the representation is just; and it is incumbent on me to exhibit it in my own defence, as, notwithstanding all these unfavorable circumstances,—and what is to me a certain prospect of being plunged into the campaign before the arrangements are made, officers appointed, &c.—great matters, I perceive, are expected from our activity this spring:—in proportion therefore will the disappointment be felt by those who are the most sanguine. For want of the ratification of Congress, the horse establishment, companies of sappers, provost-marshalcy, &c. &c. (as agreed to by the committee, and recommended to their consideration) are entirely at a stand, at a time when we ought to be deriving benefits from their execution.—In a word, at no period since the commencement of the war have I felt more painful sensations on
account

account of delay, than at the present: and, urged by them, I have expressed myself without reserve.

By a letter just received from general Weedon, I am informed of his intention to resign, if general Woodford should be restored to his former rank, which he had not then heard. General Muhlenberg is now balancing on the same point. One, therefore, if not two brigadiers, will be wanted for that state. The disadvantages resulting from the frequent resignations in the Virginia line, the changes of commanding officers to the regiments, and other causes equally distressing, have injured that corps beyond conception, and have been the means of reducing very respectable regiments in some instances to a mere handful of men; and this will ever be the case till officers can be fixed by something equivalent to the sacrifice they make. To reason otherwise, and suppose that public virtue alone will enable men to forego the ease and comforts of life, to encounter the hardships and dangers of war for a bare subsistence, when their companions and friends are amassing large fortunes,—is viewing human nature rather as it should be, than as it really is.

The clothier-general of the army, as well as the heads of every other department, should be in camp, near the commander in chief: otherwise it is impossible that the operations of war can be conducted with energy and precision. I wish most sincerely that this,—as not the least essential part of the business settled with the committee,—were decided, and a thorough investigation were had into the conduct of this department; as it is a matter of universal astonishment that we should be deficient in any article of clothing, when it is commonly asserted that the eastern states alone can furnish materials enough to clothe a hundred thousand men.—If this be a fact, there is a fatal error somewhere, to which may be attributed the death and desertion of thousands.

I shall make no apology for the freedom of this letter.—To inform Congress of such facts as materially affect the service, I conceive to be one great and essential part of my duty to them and myself. My agreement with the committee entitled me to expect upwards of forty thousand continental troops, exclusive of artillery and horse, for the service of the ensuing campaign, including those to be employed in the defence of the North river.—Instead of these, what are my prospects? Major-general the marquis De la Fayette is arrived in camp, and will resume the command of his division.—The baron De Kalb is expected in a few days. The inclosure, No. 12, is the copy of a letter from colonel Shrieve of the second Jersey battalion,

talion, containing an account of the destruction of the salt and salt-works at Squan,—and No. 3, of a letter from general M^r. Dougal, shewing the state of affairs in that department.—With very great respect, I have the honor to be, &c. G. W.

P. S. Your favor of the eighth instant, inclosing the act of Congress appointing captain Lee major and commandant of an independent corps, is this moment come to hand.

SIR,

Valley Forge, April 18, 1778.

ON thursday evening I had the honor to receive your two letters of the fourteenth instant.—I am much obliged by the fresh assurances which Congress are pleased to make me of their confidence; and they may be satisfied that I wish nothing more ardently than that a good and perfect agreement should subsist between us.

The negotiation between the commissioners is ended without effecting a cartel; nor do I suppose, from the information I have received on the subject, that there is any good prospect that one will ever be formed, at least for a great while, on a liberal and extensive plan.—A report of the proceedings of the commissioners on our part, at their several meetings, I take the liberty to inclose. The papers, No. 1, contain the letters between general Howe and myself, stipulating the neutrality of Germantown, —our respective powers,—and the result of the meeting there; —No. 2, the subsequent proceedings at Newtown. The old agreement, I presume, continues; and under it we must carry on exchanges.

General Muhlenberg has communicated his determination to resign, but has promised not to leave his brigade till Congress shall appoint another general in his room, provided it is done in any reasonable time.

By postponing my call upon the militia, as mentioned in my last of the tenth, I did not mean to decline it altogether. I did not see the necessity of calling out five thousand for the sole purpose of defence; and, in the present situation of things, I cannot perceive my way sufficiently clear for offensive measures, as I do not know when to expect the recruits from the different states, nor what prospect the commissary has of provision:—as we only get it from hand to mouth, assembling the militia, unless for the purpose of defence, should be the last thing done, as they soon become impatient, and are very expensive in the articles of stores, camp utensils, provisions, &c.

The inclosed draught of a bill was brought to head-quarters yesterday afternoon by a gentleman who informed me that a large cargo of them had been just sent out of Philadelphia. Whether this insidious proceeding is genuine and imported in the packet which arrived a few days ago, or contrived in Philadelphia, is a point undetermined and immaterial; but it is certainly founded on principles of the most * * *,—meant to poison the minds of the people, and detach the wavering at least from our cause. I suppose it will obtain a place in the papers, and am not without anxiety that it will have a malignant influence.—I would submit it whether it will not be highly expedient for Congress to investigate it in all its parts, and to expose in the most striking manner the injustice, delusion, and fraud, it contains.—I trust it will be attacked, in every shape, in every part of the continent.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Valley-Forge, April 20, 1778.

WITH your letter of the seventeenth instant, and its inclosures, I was duly honored on saturday afternoon.—When I addressed you on the eighteenth, I was doubtful whether the draught of the bill then transmitted was not spurious and contrived in Philadelphia: but its authenticity, I am almost certain, is not to be questioned. The information from Philadelphia seems clear and conclusive that it came over in the packet, with lord North's speech on the introduction of it into parliament. I inclose a paper containing his speech, which just came to hand.—This bill I am persuaded, will pass into a law.—Congress will perceive by the minister's speech, that it aims at objects of the greatest extent and importance, and will, no doubt, in one way or other, involve the most interesting consequences to this country.

With great respect, I have the honor to be, sir, your most obedient servant,

G. W.

SIR,

Valley-Forge, April 23, 1778.

I TAKE the liberty to transmit you a letter which I received yesterday from governor Tryon, inclosing the draughts of the two bills I forwarded before, with his certificate of the manner in which they came to his hands, accompanied by his
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more extraordinary and impertinent request, that, through my means, the contents should be communicated to the officers and men of this army. This engine of ministry, from governor Livingston's account, is very industriously circulating copies of these draughts, in obedience to their and his royal mandates.—The letter which I inclose, and a triplicate, came to hand at one time: some future conveyance, it is probable, will present me the duplicate.

I would also take the liberty to inclose you the Evening Post, No. 475, which governor Livingston was so obliging as to send me yesterday. Were we not fully satisfied from our experience, that there are no artifices, no measures too * * * for the enemy or their adherents to attempt in order to promote their views, we might be astonished at the daring confidence, in defiance of the opinion of the world, manifested in a publication in this paper, purporting to be a resolution of congress, of the twentieth of February. This proceeding is infamous to the last degree, and calculated to produce the most baneful consequences by exciting an opposition in the people to our draughting system, and embarrassing at least the only probable mode now left us for raising men. I think it of great importance that the forgery should be announced in the most public manner, and am the more induced to this opinion from governor Livingston's account of the disagreeable operation it has had, and is still likely to produce, if not contradicted. If it is, and with a few strictures, I should hope that it would excite in the breasts of all our countrymen, a just and generous contempt of the enemy for such a dirty, wicked proceeding.

I was last night honored with your favor of the eighteenth instant, with the proceedings alluded to.—A general plan of operations for the campaign is indispensably essential to be settled. I have thought much upon the subject: and some propositions respecting it were put into the hands of all the general officers here on tuesday evening, for their consideration. I also intended to send a messenger this day to meet general Gates, supposing him to be on his way to Hudson's-river, and to request his call at this camp, that we might enter into a full and free discussion on the point.—There is not a moment to be delayed in forming some general system, in my opinion; and I only wait the arrival of generals Gates and Mifflin, to summon a council for the purpose.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

It is confidently reported,—and I have little doubt of the truth of it,—that sir William Howe is recalled, and that general

ral Clinton is to succeed him in the command.—I have also the pleasure to transmit a list of fundry officers exchanged on the twenty-first instant.

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 Sir,

Valley-Forge, April 25, 1778.

I BEG leave to inform Congress that the report of the commissioners coming, according to intelligence received yesterday by a person of Philadelphia, is confidently believed; and it is there thought they will very soon arrive. I think it almost certain that the matter will not be delayed, as the conduct of ministry, in not sending them immediately after their former propositions, has been much reprobated, and as it may be of much importance to improve the first impressions of the people upon the occasion.—Lord Amherst, admiral Keppel, and general Murray, are said to be the persons appointed; and it is likely they are vested with both civil and military powers.—The information was through the channel of a sensible intelligent man, well known, and of esteemed credit. He is connected with the British army, having two or three brothers in it.—I shall transmit the earliest accounts I may receive from time to time on this very interesting subject.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

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 Sir,

Valley-Forge, April 27, 1778.

I HAD the honor yesterday afternoon to receive your letter of the twenty-fourth, continued to the twenty-fifth, with its important inclosures.—Congress will be pleased to accept my sincere thanks for the fresh instance of confidence manifested in their resolution of the twenty-third, and other proceedings; and they may rest assured that whatever powers are entrusted to me shall be invariably directed to promote the interest of these states. If in any case there should be a misapplication or failure in the execution, it will be the effect of mistake and not of design.

I shall take measures for distributing the report of the committee on Lord North's bills, and the resolution of the twenty-third inviting delinquents to return to their allegiance and to the protection of these states. This proceeding appears to me founded in great good policy; and I should hope that it will

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be attended with many valuable consequences:—but this can only be proved by the event.

Though I wish most heartily for the aid of general Lee in council and upon every other occasion,—yet, as the time of his return is uncertain, or at least it will be several days before it takes place,—and as it seems to me that there is not a moment to lose in forming some general system for our operations,—I should think it inexpedient for general Gates to delay coming to camp till his arrival. After a plan is digested, there will be a great deal of time expended before things will be in a proper train for execution. The season is fast advancing; and the period which may be most favorable for any designs we may form will presently arrive.

I take the liberty to transmit an extract of a letter from general Heath, which will shew Congress that he is pressed on all sides for money. Governor Livingston too is apprehensive he will be under embarrassments on account of the purchase of horses in consequence of the recommendation of the committee. Their letter to him by some means has been mislaid in the assembly, and he does not know exactly the mode prescribed for the payment. I cannot inform him myself, or do what perhaps is more necessary,—furnish him with money; and therefore hope that Congress or the committee will.

I have written major-general Tryon a few lines in answer to his letter, a copy of which is inclosed.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, April 30, 1778.

THE extensive ill consequences, arising from a want of uniformity in discipline and manœuvres throughout the army, have long occasioned me to wish for the establishment of a well-organised inspectorship: and the concurrence of Congress in the same views has induced me to set on foot a temporary institution, which, from the success that has hitherto attended it, gives me the most flattering expectations, and will, I hope, obtain their approbation.

Baron De Steuben's length of service in the first military school in Europe, and his former rank, pointed him out as a person peculiarly qualified to be at the head of this department. This appeared the least exceptionable way of introducing him into the army, and one that would give him the most ready opportunity of displaying his talents. I therefore proposed to him

him to undertake the office of inspector-general, which he agreed to with the greatest cheerfulness, and has performed the duties of it with a zeal and intelligence equal to our wishes. He has two ranks of inspectors under him: the lowest are officers charged with the inspection of brigades, with the title of brigade-inspectors: the others superintended several of these: they have written instructions relative to their several functions; and the manœuvres which they are to practise are illustrated by a company which the baron has taken the pains to train himself.

The brigade-inspectors were chosen by the brigadier and the commanding officers of regiments in each brigade. The inspectors are lieutenant colonels Barber of Jersey, Brooks of Massachusetts, Davis of Virginia, and monsieur Ternant, a French gentleman:—the reason for employing him (apart of his intrinsic merit and abilities) was his possessing the French and English languages equally, which made him a necessary assistant to the Baron de Steuben. He is content to serve without rank, until, after an experiment of his abilities, Congress shall determine what he is entitled to.

Upon the arrival of lieutenant-colonel Fleury in camp, as he was unemployed, and had exercised the office of aid-major in France, the Baron proposed to have him employed as an inspector; in which I readily acquiesced, as Congress had given him the rank and pay of lieutenant-colonel.—There may be other foreign officers in continental pay, idle for want of being attached to some corps, of whose services we might avail ourselves this way, which is the only method of disposing of them, unless they could be formed into a distinct corps.

From the extraordinary fatigue and close attention required of the officers employed in the inspectorship, I did not think it amiss to let them entertain hopes that Congress would allow some addition to the pay which they derive from their rank; and I take the liberty of recommending the measure. I would propose twenty dollars, per month for the brigade inspectors, and thirty for the inspectors, in addition to their pay in the line.

I should do injustice if I were to be longer silent with regard to the merits of the baron De Steuben. His knowledge of his profession, added to the zeal which he has discovered since he began upon the functions of his office, lead me to consider him as an acquisition to the service, and to recommend him to the attention of Congress. His expectations with regard

gard to rank extend to that of major-general. His final address he ingenuously confesses, will not admit of his serving with what the incidental emoluments: and Congress, I presume from his character and their own knowledge of him, will without difficulty gratify him in these particulars.

The baron is sensible that our situation requires a few variations in the duties of his office from the general practice in Europe, and particularly that they must necessarily be more comprehensive; in which, as well as in his instructions, he has skillfully yielded to circumstances.—The success which has hitherto attended the plan enables me to request with confidence the ratification of Congress, and is, I think, a pledge of the establishment of a well-combined general system, which insurmountable obstacles have hitherto opposed.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Valley-Forge, May 1, 1778.

I HAVE had the honor to receive your dispatches of the twenty-seventh instant. In compliance with the request of Congress, I shall immediately call upon the officers in the army to take the oath of allegiance and abjuration. This I should have done as soon as the resolution passed, had it not been for the state of the army at that time, and that there were some strong reasons which made it expedient to defer the matter.

My opinion upon the subject of a future provision for the officers hath been so fully, and, I trust, so necessarily and equitably urged, that I shall not add further respecting it, except my sincere wishes that the establishment was determined on. Nothing, in my idea, can be more just; and I am certain there is nothing more essential:—the present unsettled state of the army is hurtful in the extreme.

Since my letter of the twenty-seventh, I have received authentic information of the sailing of a very large number of transports from Philadelphia,—two hundred, it is said. They went down the Delaware the beginning of the week, light and empty.—I have not been able to learn any thing of their destination; nor can I form a conjecture upon the occasion, that is the least satisfactory.

With infinite pleasure I beg leave to congratulate Congress on the very important and interesting advices brought by the frigate *La Sensible*.—General M'Dougal and Mr. Deane were so obliging as to transmit me the outlines of the good tidings.

As

him, as Congress may think it expedient, I shall be happy to give an opportunity of announcing to the army, with the usual ceremony, such parts of the intelligence as may be proper, as mentioned by authority. I have mentioned the matter to such officers as I have seen; and I believe no event was ever received with more heart-felt joy.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

P. S. Just as I had finished my letter above, I received the honor of your favor of the twenty-eighth, with the resolution and packets alluded to. I will take measures for dispersing the printed resolutions.

SIR,

Camp, May 1, 1778.

IN compliance with your request contained in your letter of the thirteenth ultimo, I have delivered the bundle of papers respecting the loss of Ticonderoga, &c. transmitted me some time ago, which I hope will get safe to hand.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, Valley-Forge, May 3, 1778.

IN a late letter from general Schuyler, I received the proceedings of a board of commissioners for Indian affairs, held at Albany the fifteenth of last month. It appears by them and some other accounts I have seen, that there is but little prospect of succeeding in the plan for engaging a body of Indians from that quarter to serve with this army. The advantage which the enemy possesses over us, in having the means of making presents much more liberally than we can, has made a strong impression upon their minds, and seems to be more than a counterbalance for any arguments we can offer to conciliate their attachment. They also appear to be apprehensive for their own safety, and rather to wish for aid and protection from us, than willing to leave their habitations and come to our assistance.

The measure proposed was by way of experiment, as one which might possibly be attended with valuable consequences, and, if it could have been effected without much difficulty, might have been worth a trial. But, as the scheme does not well correspond with their present disposition, and may serve to increase our embarrassments in keeping them even in tolerable

ble good humour, I am inclined to think it would be most advisable to relinquish the attempt. They may be told of what has happened in Europe, with proper embellishments, and that our affairs are now upon such a footing as to render their aid in the field unnecessary, and that all we require of them is their friendship and good wishes. This and promises of protection may have a powerful and happy effect.

It is of great importance to counteract the temptation held out by the enemy, and to secure the good will of the Indians, who appear to be at least in a state of hesitancy and indecision, if nothing worse. Congress, I am persuaded, will do every thing in their power to promote these desirable ends.

With great respect and esteem, I have the honor to be, sir,
your most obedient servant,

G. W.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, Valley-Forge, May 4, 1778.

LAST night at eleven o'clock I was honored with your dispatches of the third.—The contents afford me the most sensible pleasure. Mr. Simeon Deane had informed me by a line from Bethlehem, that he was the bearer of the articles of alliance, &c. between France and the states.—I shall defer celebrating this happy event in a suitable manner until I have liberty from Congress to announce it publicly. I will only say that the army are anxious to manifest their joy upon the occasion.

Inclosed you have a letter which I received a few days ago from lord Stirling, and which, at his request, I lay before Congress, with its contents.

I am, with the greatest esteem and respect, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Valley-Forge, May 11, 1778.

I TAKE the liberty to transmit to Congress a copy of a letter from general Howe, which I received at three o'clock this afternoon. The contents are exceedingly interesting to the unhappy prisoners in his hands. I thought it my duty to forward them immediately; and I must request that Congress will be pleased to inform me as soon as possible, what line of conduct I am to pursue upon this occasion.—The inclosed extract of a letter from general Smallwood will shew the painful alternative to which the prisoners in Philadelphia will be reduced.

duced unless they are relieved : and this is confirmed by intelligence through several other channels to myself.—I shall wait directions in the matter, and govern myself by them in my answer to general Howe.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

P. S. As to an equivalent in men for officers, that proposed by his commissioners were too high. A much more moderate one was nearly agreed to between them and the gentlemen deputed by me, when they were in treaty.—This mode of relief, at this instant, may not be necessary to adopt. There are probably officers in general Burgoyne's army who are desirous of being exchanged : and, if not, an equivalent may be fixed on, as circumstances may point out.

SIR,

Valley-Forge, May 12, 1778.

I HAD the honor to receive in due time your several favors of the third, sixth, and ninth instant, with the papers to which they respectively alluded.—After much consideration upon the subject, I have appointed general M'Intosh to command at Fort-Pitt and in the western country, for which he will set out as soon as he can accommodate his affairs. I part with this gentleman with much reluctance, as I esteem him an officer of great worth and merit, and as I know his services here are and will be materially wanted. His firm disposition and equal justice, his assiduity and good understanding,—added to his being a stranger to all parties in that quarter,—pointed him out as a proper person ; and I trust, extensive advantages will be derived, from his command, which I could wish was more agreeable.—He will wait on Congress for their instructions.

As lieutenant-colonel Southerland, major Agnew, and lieutenant Poe, have only requested to go to Europe on parole, it does not appear to me that I can with propriety apply to general Howe for their exchange :—this would imply that they were prisoners of war. Though their exchange is certainly the most desirable mode of release as it would relieve an equal number of our officers from captivity, yet I should be happy if a negotiation for the purpose should commence on their part. Knowing that it would be our interest to exchange all the officers of general Burgoyne's army if it could be done, I wrote general Heath not long since, to take occasion to mention to them that we should always be willing to accede to any equal propositions

propositions for that purpose, and would carefully convey their applications to sir William Howe or the general who might command the British army.—I take the liberty to return their letters, presuming that Congress may incline to give them some answer, either directly, or through general Heath.

In respect to lieutenant-colonel * * *, I do not find that there is any necessity for granting the prayer of his petition: we have already too many officers; and I do not apprehend the interest of the states would be much promoted in his appointment. If he could make up two or three companies, they would be of prisoners and deserters, who would most assuredly embrace an early opportunity to go off with their arms and clothing. I am disposed to consider him as a man of some address and policy, as he is aiming at a confirmation in the line of the army (by obtaining an appointment to a new corps) of the rank which he had as a division quarter-master. Besides the impolicy of augmenting the number of our officers where it is not really essential, such a promotion would give dissatisfaction; and I suppose there are few officers, if any, who formerly commanded Mr. * * * in the line of the army, that would submit to his orders.

The inclosed copy of a letter from general Dickinson to me will inform Congress of the fate of the continental frigates in Delaware,—a fate (in the situation they were left) I had long predicted, and which I had taken much pains to avert, by using every argument in my power to have them sunk. In that case, their destruction would have been at least a work of time, difficulty and expense, and might have been perhaps prevented.—About one o'clock on thursday I got notice of an intended move of the enemy by water; and, conjecturing the destination of it, had a detachment under general Maxwell (whose tour of duty it was) ready to march towards the Delaware by four o'clock: but a heavy rain prevented their moving till next morning.

I have been happy in the exchange, and a visit from lieutenant-colonel Allen. His fortitude and firmness seem to have placed him out of the reach of misfortune. There is an original something in him that commands admiration; and his long captivity and sufferings have only served to increase if possible his enthusiastic zeal.—He appears very desirous of rendering his services to the states, and of being employed, and at the same time does not discover any ambition for high rank.—Congress will herewith receive a letter from him; and I doubt

not

not they will make such provision for him as they may think proper and suitable.

I take pleasure in transmitting a Philadelphia paper of the ninth, which came to hand yesterday evening, containing a message from his most christian majesty to the court of London in consequence of the treaty between him and these states,—and his Britannic majesty's address to the lords and commons, &c.—The message is received in terms of irony and derision, more degrading to the pride and dignity of Britain than any thing she has ever experienced since she has been a nation. It is not an actual declaration of war, but it certainly must produce one.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

P. S. A great number of blank oaths will be wanted. You will be pleased to order some by every opportunity.

SIR,

Valley Forge, May 18, 1778.

I HAVE been honored with your two favors of the eleventh and fifteenth instant, with the several papers alluded to, the former by monsieur Jemat, the latter by express yesterday. Colonel Johnson set out on saturday afternoon to wait on Congress upon the subject of his appointment, and, I presume, will be at Yoik to-day.

I shall announce the resolution of the fifteenth to the army, and would flatter myself it will quiet in a great measure the uneasiness which have been so extremely distressing, and prevent resignations, which had proceeded, and were likely to be at such a height, as to destroy our whole military system. It has experienced no inconsiderable shock, particularly in the line of some states, from the loss of several very valuable officers.

The letter and brevet for colonel Allen I will transmit by the first opportunity.—He left camp eight days ago.

From a variety of concurring circumstances, and the uniform report of persons who have left Philadelphia within four days past, it would appear that the enemy mean to evacuate the city. It is said they have already embarked a part of their heavy cannon and baggage,—that transports are fitted and fitting for their horse, and taking in hay. The accounts further add that there has been a press for some nights in the city, and several men obtained in this way, and carried aboard ship; also that there has been an increased number of vendues. These circumstances

circumstances all indicate an evacuation: but I have not been able to learn the objects of their future operations.—I wrote to general Gates yesterday upon the subject, that he may be prepared in the best manner the situation of things will admit, in case they should be destined for the North-river,—and desired him to retain for the present all the eastern recruits intended for this army.

The quarter-master-general and commissary of provisions are directed to use every possible exertion for putting the affairs of their departments in a train to facilitate a movement in case it should be necessary. But such have been the derangements and disorders in them, that we must be greatly embarrassed for a considerable time yet.

A valuable detachment, under the command of the marquis Fayette, marched this morning, which is intended to move between the Delaware and Schuylkill, for restraining the enemy's parties, procuring intelligence, and to act as circumstance may require.

I cannot help feeling for the prisoners in possession of the enemy. If they evacuate Philadelphia, those unhappy men will be dragged away with them, and perhaps to a more miserable confinement. But, supposing that their future treatment should not be worse, or even that it should be more comfortable than their past,—the idea of being removed farther from their friends, and farther from relief, must distress them to the last degree.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

P. S. I would take the liberty to mention that I think the arms and clothing expected from France should be brought forward without a moment's delay after they arrive. The impolicy of suffering them ever to remain in places accessible to shipping, out of the question,—our distress for both is amazingly great: we have many men now without firelocks, and many coming in, in the same predicament; and half the army are without shirts. Our condition, for want of the latter, and blankets, is quite painful—of the former, very distressing. The doctors attribute in a great degree the loss of hundreds of lives by the scarcity of clothing; and I am certain hundreds have deserted from the same cause.

Head.

SIR, *Head-Quarters, Valley-Forge, May 21, 1778.*

GENERAL M'Intosh will have the honor to deliver you this. He is now on his way to take the command at Pittsburg and in the western frontiers, and waits on Congress for their instructions.—I would take the liberty of submitting to Congress the inclosed account of expenses incurred by the general in his journey from Georgia to join this army, and which he presented to me and to the auditors for payment. I did not know how far I might be authorized to comply with his request, and therefore lay the matter before Congress. At the same time I would observe that nothing appears to me more equitable than that claims of this sort, where they are not immoderate, should be satisfied by the public.—If this were not the case, the expenses of an officer, when ordered from one post to another, especially where they are distant, would sink the whole or a very large part of his pay.—The charges attending the general's journey from hence to Pittsburg will require equal attention; and the whole, I am persuaded, will meet with a just and suitable provision.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Valley-Forge, May 28, 1778.

SINCE I had the honor of addressing you on the twenty-fourth instant, nothing material has happened. The enemy are still in Philadelphia: but the intelligence from thence is so clear and so strong, that it is certain, or nearly as much so as any event can be that is contingent, that they mean to abandon it. Against the various measures they are pursuing, which point to an evacuation, there is but one single circumstance opposed that I can learn, which is, that they are working at their redoubts with great industry. But this fact, though certainly true, cannot be of sufficient weight to raise a doubt upon the subject, and must be considered as merely calculated to deceive us, and to mask their design.

We cannot find out, notwithstanding the most diligent pains, whether their movement will be by land or sea; nor are the inhabitants of the town satisfied on the point.—Appearances favor either.—They have a great many ships, and very large: yet, from a preparation of boats at Prince's-bay on the south side of Staten-Island which I am just advised of, and for some other reasons, a land route is not improbable.

I have

I have detached to Jersey the whole of the troops of that state under general Maxwell, which, I flatter myself, with the militia general Dickinson will be able to collect, will give them some annoyance in case they attempt to retreat by land.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Valley-Forge, May 28, 1778.

LIEUTENANT-colonel John Gibson, of the sixth Virginia regiment, who, from his knowledge of the western country, and Indian nations and language, is ordered to repair to Pittsburg, will have the honor of delivering you this. He is entitled, and has been ever since the twenty-fifth of October last, to a regiment in that line; and I must take the liberty to request that Congress will give him a commission of that date.—The resolution of the thirty-first of December, “recommending the states to suspend filling up regimental vacancies,”—my expectations that some officers of inferior rank, and perhaps of the same, belonging to other states, might be reduced upon a new arrangement,—and the certainty, that, if I gave commissions in one instance, I should be obliged to do it in all,—have prevented me appointing him to the vacancy he had a right to. I do not know particularly to what regiment he ought to be appointed: Congress therefore will be pleased to give him a commission for a regiment from the state of Virginia, without mentioning the number.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

P. S. Many copies of oaths are still wanted.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, Valley-Forge, May 31, 1778.

I HAD the honor to receive your favor of the twenty-fifth instant by doctor Scudder, and that of the twenty-ninth, yesterday afternoon, with the inclosures and packet to which they referred.

I shall inform major Lee of the new arrangement of his corps, and will appoint the officers required.—Major Beatty is not in camp. The letter addressed to him shall be sent by the first opportunity to Princeton, where I presume he will be found. That for captain Smith is already dispatched to him.

The enemy are yet in Philadelphia, though the whole chain of information for several days past afforded grounds to believe that

that they would have evacuated it before now.—I should suppose they are nearly prepared to do it, though the removal of the stores and baggage of so large an army requires considerable time.

June 1.—I should be glad to know, in case Philadelphia is evacuated, whether any and what line of conduct is to be pursued respecting the goods that may be left.—Such articles as come under the denomination of public stores will of course be taken by the proper officers for the use of the states.—The point on which I wish directions is with respect to goods and merchandize, private property. I do not know whether any considerable quantity may be left: but it has been suggested, that, from an expectation of the sort, there are some bringing into light their gold and silver for the purpose of buying up.—If there should be clothing suitable for the army; perhaps there might be nothing unjust in the public's taking the preference, and Congress appointing one or two intelligent active persons of address, acquainted with the city and with those who have the goods, with proper powers to purchase them.

Whatever measure may be thought expedient, it will be necessary to adopt it as early as possible, as the evacuation will probably take place in a short time. Robert Morris, esquire, I should imagine, if the purchasing scheme is determined on, will be able to point out proper persons. Some gentlemen have mentioned messieurs Samuel Howell and Thomas Franklin as well qualified both on account of their integrity and attachment to our cause, and from their knowledge of the city and residence in it ever since the enemy had the possession.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

P. S. I was just now honored with your letter of the thirty-first ultimo.

Sir,

Valley-Forge, June 2, 1778.

I BEG leave to inform you, that, agreeable to the resolutions transmitted in your favor of the thirty-first ultimo, I shall undertake the reform of the North-Carolina battalions in camp as soon as circumstances will admit.

I sincerely wish the legislatures of the several states had passed laws adopting the generous policy recommended by Congress in their resolution of the twenty-third of April. I am assured by authority not to be questioned, that, for want of this, hundreds, nay thousands of people, and among them many valuable artificers

artisans with large quantities of goods, will be forced from Philadelphia, who otherwise would willingly remain. From report, their reluctance and distress upon this occasion are scarcely to be paralleled.—There are a few whose conduct has been such, that no assurances of security, I presume, could induce them to stay: and their departure, compelled and founded as it were in the approbation of their own consciences, would answer all the purposes of example, especially if followed by a confiscation of property.—A proscribing system, or laws having the same effect, when carried to a great extent, ever appeared to me to be impolitic: and their operation should always cease with the causes which produced them. Examples in terrorem are necessary: but to exile many of its inhabitants cannot be the interest of any state.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Valley Forge, June 4, 1778.

I TAKE the liberty to transmit you by express the inclosed packet which just arrived at our advanced post by a flag from sir Henry Clinton. I also transmit a copy of a letter I received from him, of the thirtieth ultimo, and of my answer; likewise copies of his and lord Howe's letters which came to hand by the present flag.—The packet, I presume, contains Acts similar to those sent to me.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, June 7, 1778.

I HAVE been duly honored with your favors of the fourth and fifth instant, and with the resolutions and papers to which they refer.—I have taken measures to communicate the new establishment of the army through the line; and the sooner the arrangements can be made, the better. Should there appear further regulations necessary, I shall take the liberty to offer my sentiments respecting them.

My principal design, in addressing you so soon after the receipt of your letters, is to advise Congress of the arrival of the commissioners. Lord Carlisle, governor Johnston, and William Eden, esquire, are come over in this character, and got to Philadelphia yesterday. Lord Cornwallis is also arrived.

VOL. II.

G g

I have

I have been just favored with the inclosed British paper, which I transmit for your perusal.—Some parts of it are very interesting.

By some accident the copies of the resolutions of the tenth of January, referred to in that of the fourth instant, have been mislaid or lost. This circumstance lays me under the necessity of troubling you with a request for others.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

P. S. I am told a resolution passed about the nineteenth ultimo, respecting the payment of prisoners either in the actual possession of the enemy, or on parole. I do not recollect to have been honored with it; and, if there is such a one, I wish to be favored with a copy for the government of my conduct.

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SIR,

Head-Quarters, Valley-Forge, June 9, 1778.

I WAS favored with yours of the sixth instant, inclosing copies of your answers to lord Howe and general Clinton. The originals I sent in early this morning by a flag.—I have the honor to transmit you a duplicate of a letter I received from sir Henry Clinton for the purpose of procuring a passport for doctor Ferguson (the secretary to the king's commission) to Congress, with my answer to him,—on the subject of which, Congress will be pleased to favor me with their instructions.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

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SIR,

Head-Quarters, June 10, 1778.

MAJOR Campbell of the thirteenth Virginia regiment will have the honor of presenting you with this. He is now on his way, at the earnest solicitation of general M'Intosh, to serve in the western department, and waits on Congress, to obtain (if they shall think proper) a commission for a lieutenant-colonelcy in the Virginia line, to which he has been entitled in the ordinary cause since the twentieth of February last.—The major sustains the character of a good and brave officer, and has behaved as such during his service.—He is the more desirous of getting a commission at this time, as otherwise he may be commanded by the lieutenant-colonels to be, or who are, appointed to the two new regiments lately ordered to be raised in that quarter. I do not know the particular regiment to which he

he should be affixed; therefore, if he obtains a commission, it may be left blank in this instance.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, June 15, 1778.

I HAVE been duly honored with your favors of the eleventh and fourteenth instant, and with the inclosures to which they refer.—The resolution for settling the value of rations which have become due since the first of January, and fixing the mode of payment, I shall announce in this day's orders, and hope it will be highly satisfactory to all who are interested in it.

I have notified general Mifflin of the inquiry directed by Congress on the eleventh instant, by transmitting him a copy of their proceedings; and he has obtained leave, on his solicitation, to repair to York, &c. to prepare for his defence. This I thought myself under a necessity of granting, however inconvenient and injurious it may be to permit the absence of officers at this period.

Our expectations that Philadelphia will be evacuated in the course of a few days are again up. The information received yesterday through various channels, and in a pretty direct way, would seem to place the matter almost on the footing of a certainty.

We had about forty privates and twenty seamen exchanged on Sunday. Another party will be exchanged to-day; and, according to agreement, the whole of our unfortunate men will be released as fast as we can bring down parties of the prisoners in our hands, to give for them.—It is thought by some we shall not have an opportunity of completing the exchange of all those in Philadelphia before the enemy leave it.—Mr. Boudinot has also settled and adjusted the whole number of prisoners we are to account for (besides those now in actual confinement) at nine hundred, which is less than half of the claim Sir William Howe so pertinaciously and so long adhered to.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

Head-Quarters, half after eleven, A. M. June 18, 1778.

SIR,

I HAVE the pleasure to inform Congress that I was this minute advised by Mr. Roberts that the enemy evacuated the city

city early this morning. He was down at the middle ferry on this side, where he received the intelligence from a number of citizens who were on the opposite shore. They told him that about three thousand of the troops had embarked on board transports. The destruction of the bridge prevented him crossing. I expect every moment official accounts on the subject.

I have put six brigades in motion; and the rest of the army are preparing to follow with all possible dispatch. We shall proceed towards Jersey, and govern ourselves according to circumstances. As yet I am not fully ascertained of the enemy's destination; nor are there wanting a variety of opinions as to the route they will pursue, whether it will be by land or sea, admitting it to be to New-York. Some think it probable, in such case that the part of their army which crossed the Delaware will march down the Jersey shore some distance, and then embark.—There is other intelligence corroborating Mr. Roberts's, but none official is yet come.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

A letter from captain M^cClean, dated in Philadelphia, this minute came to hand, confirming the evacuation.

SIR, *Head-Quarters, June 18, 1778, six o'clock, P. M.*

SINCE I had the honor of addressing you this forenoon, I received your letter of the seventeenth, with its several inclosures.—I am happy in the approbation of Congress respecting my conduct to doctor Ferguson. I could not find, after the maturest consideration on the subject, that his passage through the country could be in any wise material, or answer any other purpose than to spread disaffection.

I shall take every measure in my power to prevent an intercourse between the army and the enemy, and also between the inhabitants and the latter. You may rest assured that whatever letters come from their lines shall be, as they ever have been, minutely inspected; and whenever they import any thing of an insidious cast, they shall be suppressed. In this I trust I shall not offend against any rule of right, nor the strictest propriety.

The letter for the commissioners I shall transmit by the earliest opportunity: however, their departure from Philadelphia will prevent their getting it as soon as they otherwise would have done.—I cannot say that I regret the delay: for there is no knowing to what acts of depredation and ruin their disappointed ambition might have led. And permit me to add that I think there was no other criterion for Congress to go by, than the one they

they have adopted. The proceedings of the twenty-second of April, it is probable, have reached Britain by this time, and will shew that the present powers of the commissioners, or at least those we are obliged to suppose them to possess, are wholly incompatible to any valuable end.

I have appointed general Arnold to command in Philadelphia, as the state of his wound will not permit his services in a more active line. Colonel Jackson, with a detachment of troops, is to attend him: and I flatter myself that order will be preserved, and the several purposes answered, expressed by Congress in their resolution of the fourth instant.—The general set out this evening, and I myself shall move with the main body of the army at five in the morning to-morrow.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

P. S. By this conveyance you will be pleased to receive the proceedings of the court of inquiry respecting the losses of the forts in the Highlands.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, June 18, 1778.

THE baron Steuben will have the honor to deliver you this. I do not know particularly the extent of his business at York; but, from what he has communicated, it is in part to get the duties and powers of his appointment minutely defined and settled. I inclose a copy of orders on the fifteenth instant, which were issued to quiet the minds of the general officers, and to remove a spirit of jealousy which but too apparently was rising among them. These contain my ideas of the principal duties of the inspector's office, and, I have reason to think, are generally agreeable to the army. While I am on this subject, I must do justice to the baron's intelligence, zeal, and indefatigable industry, from which we have experienced very happy effects.

The inclosed letter I transmit at the request of captain Gibbs; and I wish to recommend him to the consideration of Congress. He has been in the army from the commencement of the war, and in the capacities he mentions. When Congress were pleased to honor me with the appointment of officers for the sixteen additional battalions, I offered to make some provision for him; but this he declined, preferring to remain in my family. The guard he commanded originally consisted of fifty men: but, since the arrival of baron Steuben, it has been augmented to a hundred and fifty. He advised that there should be a select corps

of

of this number to receive the manœuvres in the first instance, and to act as a model to the army; and proposed that it should be formed of the old guard company and draughts from the line. I presume,—if it should be Congress's pleasure,—that a majority would be highly agreeable to the captain, and is as much as he expects.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

June 20, 1778, four o'clock, P. M.

I HAVE the honor to inform you that I am now advanced with the main body of the army within ten miles of Coryel's ferry, and shall halt to refresh the troops and for the night, as the weather is very rainy.—General Lee, with the six brigades mentioned in my former letter, will reach the ferry this evening.

My last accounts from Jersey were from general Dickinson, dated yesterday at three o'clock, P. M. These say the enemy had then advanced to Eyrestown, three miles below Mount-Holly, and were busily employed in repairing the bridge which had been destroyed. General Dickinson adds that there had been a brisk firing for some minutes between the enemy and Maxwell's brigade, or a part of it, in their advance, in which the former, according to the report of a deserter, had several killed. He further says the militia had been [*apprised*] of their approach, were in good spirits, and that he expected to-day to be tolerably strong.—I have this minute written him by express, requesting him to acquaint me with their and his own situation, what number of men he has already collected, and what further augmentations he expects to receive.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

June 21,—ten miles from Coryel's.

THIS will be delivered you by major Wemp who has the care of some warriors of the Seneca nation. The inclosed copy of a letter from our commissioners will shew that they are come to obtain the release of Astiarix, another warrior, who was taken on the frontiers of Virginia. I never heard of the circumstance till I was informed of it a few days ago by a letter from general Schuyler. As the commissioners have consented to his exchange, and advised it, I have assured them it was agreeable to

to me; and I must take the liberty to request that Congress will order it to be accomplished as soon as possible.

I have treated them with civility, but declared at the same time, in answer to their speeches both in council and as warriors,—if they do not immediately cease hostilities, and become our friends, or at least neutral,—that, the moment we are clear of the British army, I will turn our whole force against them and the other nations at war with us, and cut them off to a man. They saw the main body of our army to-day; which circumstance, added to the evacuation of Philadelphia, and the presents I wrote general Arnold to make them, with other instances of kindness, I trust, will have a happy influence on the actions and dispositions of their nation when they return.

They are also attended by a few of our Oneida and Tuscarora friends, who were thought necessary to proceed with the truce. They had dispatches from their sachems for the immediate return of such of their men and warriors as were here, on account of their apprehensions of hostilities by the Senecas, &c.—I consented to the measure, and directed that they should be furnished with ample and suitable presents, if they could be obtained previous to their departure.—The army is in march; which will not permit me to add further than that I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, near Coryel's, June 22, 1778.

I HAVE the honor to inform you that I am now in Jersey, and that the troops are passing the river at Coryel's, and are mostly over.—The latest intelligence I have had respecting the enemy was yesterday from general Dickinson. He says they were in the morning at Morestown and Mount-Holly; but that he had not been able to learn what route they would pursue from thence; nor was it easy to determine, as, from their situation, they might either proceed to South-Amboy, or by way of Brunswic. We have been a good deal impeded in our march by rainy weather.—As soon as we have cleaned the arms, and can get matters in train, we propose moving towards Princeton, in order to avail ourselves of any favorable occasions that may present themselves, of attacking or annoying the enemy.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

Englisb-

*Englishtown, six miles from Monmouth, June 28, 1778,
half after eleven, A. M.*

SIR, I WAS duly honored with your favor of the twentieth instant, with the report to which it referred, and trust my situation will apologise for my not answering it before.

I am now here with the main body of the army, and pressing hard to come up with the enemy. They encamped yesterday at Monmouth court-house, having almost the whole of their front, particularly their left wing, secured by a marsh and thick wood, and their rear by a difficult defile, from whence they moved very early this morning.—Our advance, from the rainy weather, and the intense heat when fair, (though these may have been equally disadvantageous to them) has been greatly delayed. Several of our men have fallen sick from these causes; and a few unfortunately have fainted, and died in a little time after.

We have a select and strong detachment more forward, under the command of major-general Lee, with orders to attack their rear if possible. Whether the detachment will be able to come up with it, is a matter of question, especially before they get into strong grounds. Besides this, Morgan, with his corps, and some bodies of militia, are on their flanks.

I cannot determine yet at what place they intend to embark. Some think they will push for Sandy-hook, whilst others suppose they mean to go to Shoal-harbor. The latter opinion seems to be founded in the greater probability, as, from intelligence, several vessels and craft are lying off that place.

We have made a few prisoners; and they have lost a good many men by desertion. I cannot ascertain their number, as they came in to our advanced parties, and pushed immediately into the country. I think five or six hundred is the least number that have come in, in the whole. They are chiefly foreigners.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

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Fields near Monmouth Court-House, June 29, 1778.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to inform you, that, about seven o'clock yesterday morning, both armies advanced on each other. About twelve, they met on the grounds near Monmouth court-house, when an action commenced. We forced the enemy from the

the field, and encamped on the ground. They took a strong post in our front, secured on both flanks by morasses and thick woods, where they remained till about twelve at night, and then retreated.—I cannot at this time go into a detail of matters: when opportunity will permit, I shall take the liberty of transmitting Congress a more particular account of the proceedings of the day.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Englishtown, July 1, 1778.

I EMBRACE the first moment of leisure to give Congress a more full and particular account of the movements of the army under my command since its passing the Delaware, than the situation of our affairs would heretofore permit.

I had the honor to advise them, that, on the appearances of the enemy's intention to march through Jersey becoming serious, I had detached general Maxwell's brigade in conjunction with the militia of that state to interrupt and impede their progress by every obstruction in their power, so as to give time to the army under my command to come up with them, and take advantage of any favorable circumstances that might present themselves. The army having proceeded to Coryel's ferry, and crossed the Delaware at that place, I immediately detached colonel Morgan with a select corps of six hundred men to reinforce general Maxwell, and marched with the main body towards Princeton.

The slow advance of the enemy had greatly the air of design, and led me, with others, to suspect that general Clinton, desirous of a general action, was endeavouring to draw us down into the lower country, in order, by a rapid movement, to gain our right, and take possession of the strong grounds above us.—This consideration, and to give the troops time to repose and refresh themselves from the fatigues they had experienced from rainy and excessive hot weather, determined me to halt at Hopewell township, about five miles from Princeton, where we remained till the morning of the twenty fifth.

On the preceding day I made a second detachment of fifteen hundred chosen troops under brigadier-general Scott, to reinforce those already in the vicinity of the enemy, the more effectually to annoy and delay their march. The next day the army moved to Kingston; and, having received intelligence that the enemy were prosecuting their route towards Monmouth

court-house, I dispatched a thousand select men under brigadier-general Wayne, and sent the marquis De la Fayette to take the command of the whole advanced corps, including Maxwell's brigade and Morgan's light infantry, with orders to take the first fair opportunity of attacking the enemy's rear.

In the evening of the same day, the whole army marched from Kingston, where our baggage was left, with intention to preserve a proper distance for supporting the advanced corps, and arrived at Cranberry early the next morning. The intense heat of the weather, and a heavy storm unluckily coming on, made it impossible to resume our march that day without great inconvenience and injury to the troops. Our advanced corps, being differently circumstanced, moved from the position it had held the night before, and took post in the evening on the Monmouth road, about five miles from the enemy's rear, in expectation of attacking them next morning on their march.—The main body having remained at Cranberry, the advanced corps was found to be too remote, and too far upon the right, to be supported in case of an attack either upon or from the enemy; which induced me to send orders to the marquis to file off by his left towards Englishtown, which he accordingly executed early in the morning of the twenty-seventh.

The enemy, in marching from Allentown, had changed their disposition, and placed their best troops in the rear, consisting of all the grenadiers, light infantry, and chasseurs of the line.—This alteration made it necessary to increase the number of our advanced corps; in consequence of which I detached major-general Lee with two brigades to join the marquis at Englishtown, on whom of course the command of the whole devolved, amounting to about five thousand men. The main body marched the same day, and encamped within three miles of that place. Morgan's corps was left hovering on the enemy's right flank; and the Jersey militia, amounting at this time to about seven or eight hundred men, under general Dickinson, on their left.

The enemy were now encamped in a strong position, with their right extending about a mile and a half beyond the court-house in the parting of the roads leading to Shrewsbury and Middletown, and their left along the road from Allentown to Monmouth, about three miles on this side the court-house. Their right flank lay on the skirt of a small wood, while their left was secured by a very thick one,—a morass running towards their rear, and their whole front covered by a wood, and, for a considerable extent towards the left, with a morass.—In this situation they halted till the morning of the twenty-eighth.

Matters

Matters being thus situated,—and having had the best information, that, if the enemy were once arrived at the heights of Middletown, ten or twelve miles from where they were, it would be impossible to attempt any thing against them with a prospect of success,—I determined to attack their rear the moment they should get in motion from their present ground. I communicated my intention to general Lee, and ordered him to make his disposition for the attack, and to keep his troops constantly lying upon their arms, to be in readiness at the shortest notice. This was done with respect to the troops under my immediate command.

About five in the morning, general Dickinson sent an express informing that the front of the enemy had begun their march. I instantly put the army in motion, and sent orders by one of my aids to general Lee to move on and attack them unless there should be very powerful reasons to the contrary,—acquainting him at the same time, that I was marching to support him, and, for doing it with the greater expedition and convenience, should make the men disencumber themselves of their packs and blankets.

After marching about five miles, to my great surprise and mortification, I met the whole advanced corps retreating,—and, as I was told, by general Lee's orders,—without having made any opposition, except one fire, given by a party under the command of colonel Butler, on their being charged by the enemy's cavalry, who were repulsed.—I proceeded immediately to the rear of the corps, which I found closely pressed by the enemy, and gave directions for forming part of the retreating troops, who, by the brave and spirited conduct of the officers, aided by some pieces of well-served artillery, checked the enemy's advance, and gave time to make a disposition of the left wing and second line of the army upon an eminence, and in a wood a little in the rear, covered by a morass in front. On this were placed some batteries of cannon by lord Stirling who commanded the left wing, which played upon the enemy with great effect, and, seconded by parties of infantry detached to oppose them, effectually put a stop to their advance.

General Lee being detached with the advanced corps, the command of the right wing, for the occasion, was given to general Greene. For the expedition of the march, and to counteract any attempt to turn our right, I had ordered him to file off by the new church, two miles from Englishtown, and fall into the Monmouth road, a small distance in the rear of the courthouse, while the rest of the column moved directly on towards the

the court-house. On intelligence of the retreat, he marched up and took a very advantageous position on the right.

The enemy, by this time, finding themselves warmly opposed in front, made an attempt to turn our left flank; but they were bravely repulsed and driven back by detached parties of infantry. They also made a movement to our right with as little success, general Greene having advanced a body of troops with artillery to a commanding piece of ground; which not only disappointed their design of turning our right, but severely enfiladed those in front of the left wing.—In addition to this, general Wayne advanced with a body of troops, and kept up so severe and well-directed a fire, that the enemy were soon compelled to retire behind the defile where the first stand in the beginning of the action had been made.

In this situation the enemy had both their flanks secured by thick woods and morasses, while their front could only be approached thro' a narrow pass. I resolved nevertheless to attack them; and, for that purpose, ordered general Poor, with his own and the Carolina brigade, to move round upon their right, and general Woodford upon their left, and the artillery to gall them in front. But the impediments in their way prevented their getting within reach before it was dark. They remained upon the ground they had been directed to occupy during the night, with intention to begin the attack early the next morning; and the army continued lying upon their arms in the field of action, to be in readiness to support them.

In the mean time the enemy were employed in removing their wounded, and about twelve o'clock at night marched away in such silence, that, though general Poor lay extremely near them, they effected their retreat without his knowledge. They carried off all their wounded, except four officers and about forty privates whose wounds were too dangerous to permit their removal.

The extreme heat of the weather, the fatigue of the men from their march through a deep sandy country almost entirely destitute of water, and the distance the enemy had gained by marching in the night, made a pursuit impracticable and fruitless: it would have answered no valuable purpose, and would have been fatal to numbers of our men, several of whom died the preceding day with heat.

Were I to conclude my account of this day's transactions without expressing my obligations to the officers of the army in general, I should do injustice to their merit, and violence to my own feelings. They seemed to vie with each other in manifest-

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ing their zeal and bravery. The catalogue of those who distinguished themselves is too long to admit of particularising individuals. I cannot, however, forbear mentioning brigadier-general Wayne, whose good conduct and bravery through the whole action deserves particular commendation.

The behaviour of the troops in general, after they recovered from the first surprise occasioned by the retreat of the advanced corps, was such as could not be surpassed.—All the artillery, both officers and men, that were engaged, distinguished themselves in a remarkable manner.

Inclosed, Congress will be pleased to receive a return of our killed, wounded, and missing. Among the first were lieutenant-colonel Bunner of Pennsylvania, and major Dickinson of Virginia, both officers of distinguished merit, and much to be regretted.—The enemy's slain, left on the field, and buried by us, according to the return of the persons assigned to that duty, were four officers and two hundred and forty-five private. In the former number was the honorable colonel Monckton. Exclusive of these, they buried some themselves, as there were several new graves near the field of battle.—How many men they may have had wounded, cannot be determined: but, from the usual proportion, the number must have been considerable.—There were a few prisoners taken.

The peculiar situation of general Lee at this time requires that I should say nothing of his conduct. He is now in arrest. The charges against him, with such sentence as the court-martial may decree in his case, shall be transmitted for the approbation or disapprobation of Congress, as soon as it shall be passed.

Being fully convinced by the gentlemen of this country that the enemy cannot be hurt or injured in their embarkation at Sandy-Hook, the place to which they are going,—and unwilling to get too far removed from the North-river,—I put the troops in motion early this morning, and shall proceed that way, leaving the Jersey brigade, Morgan's corps, and other light parties (the militia being all dismissed), to hover about them, to countenance desertion, and to prevent their depredations as far as possible.—After they embark, the former will take post in the neighborhood of Elizabethtown, the latter rejoin the corps from which they were detached.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

Camp

SIR,

Camp, near Brunswick, July 7, 1778.

I HAVE the honor to inform you, that, on Sunday morning, the left wing of the army moved towards the North-river; the right followed yesterday; and the second line, which forms the rear division, is also now in motion. I shall advance as fast as I can consistently with the circumstances of the weather and the health of the troops.

The enemy, from the advices of our parties of observation, were nearly if not all embarked yesterday. They have continued to desert upon all occasions.

I should be extremely happy if the committee appointed to arrange the army would repair to it as soon as possible. Congress can form no adequate idea of the discontents prevailing on account of the unsettled state of rank, and the uncertainty in which officers are as to their future situation. The variety of hands in which the power of granting commissions and filling up vacancies is lodged,—and other circumstances,—have occasioned frequent instances of younger officers commanding their seniors, from the former having received their commissions, and the latter not,—and these, not only in the line of the army at large, but in their own brigades, and even in their own regiments.—This, it will be readily conceived, is necessarily productive of much confusion, altercation and complaint, and requires the speediest remedy.

I have the honor to be, &c. G. W.

P. S. By accounts from Monmouth, more of the enemy's dead have been found.—It is said the number buried by us and the inhabitants exceeds three hundred.

SIR,

Camp, at Paramus, July 12, 1778.

ON Friday evening, I had the honor to receive your letter of the seventh instant, with its inclosures.—The vote of approbation and thanks, which Congress have been pleased to honor me with, gives me the highest satisfaction, and at the same time demands a return of my sincerest acknowledgments.—The other resolution I communicated with great pleasure to the army at large in yesterday's orders.

The left wing of the army, which advanced yesterday four miles beyond this, moved this morning on the route towards King's ferry. The right, and second line, which makes the last division, are now here, where they will halt for a day or two

two,—or perhaps longer, if no circumstances of a pressing nature cast up,—in order to refresh themselves from the great fatigues they have suffered from the intense heat of the weather.

We have had it reported for two or three days through several channels from New-York, that there is a French fleet on the coast: and it is added that the enemy have been manning with the utmost dispatch several of their ships of war which were there, and have pushed them out to sea.—How far these facts are true, I cannot determine: but I should think it of infinite importance to ascertain the first, if possible, by sending out swift-sailing cruisers. The most interesting advantages might follow the information.—I will try, by every practicable means that I can devise, to obtain an accurate account of the enemy's fleet at New-York.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Camp, Paramus, July 14, 1778.

I HAD the honor yesterday evening of receiving your very important favor of the tenth instant.—Colonel Laurens, one of my aids, will set out this morning with a letter to the French admiral, the count D'Estaing, inclosing a copy of yours and such other information as I have been able to collect. Its further purpose is for the establishing a convention of signals in case of co-operation, or to convey him such knowledge of the enemy's naval force and position, as may from time to time come under our cognisance.

It appears by intelligence of to-day that the count D'Estaing is off or near Sandy-Hook, having already seized several fishing boats on the banks, in order to procure information and pilots.

The army is in motion, and will cross the North-river with all convenient dispatch, where I shall pursue such measures as may appear best calculated for improving the present conjuncture.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Camp, near White-Plains, July 22, 1778.

SINCE I had the honor of addressing you on the fourteenth I have been favored with your letters of the eleventh and

and seventeenth, with their respective inclosures. The next morning after the receipt of the former which came to hand on the seventeenth, I dispatched lieutenant-colonel Hamilton, another of my aids, with the best pilots and the most skilful masters of ships I could procure, to admiral count D'Estaing, to converse with him more fully on the subject of his operations, than I was able to direct lieutenant-colonel Laurens to do for want of the information which I afterwards obtained from major Chouin, and a knowledge in several other points besides.

On Sunday night Mr. Laurens returned; and I found by him that it was the count's first wish to enter at Sandy-Hook, in order to possess himself of, or to destroy if possible, the whole of the British fleet lying in the bay of New-York; and that, for this purpose, he had been much engaged in his inquiries about the depth of water, and in sounding the channel to ascertain it; the result of which was, that the water, from the experiments made, was too shallow at the entrance to admit his large ships,—or, if they could be got in, it appeared that it would not be without a great deal of difficulty and risk. After this disappointment, the next important object which seemed to present itself was an attempt against Rhode-Island, which the count inclined to make (unless I should advise the contrary) as soon as the Chimère frigate, which had carried his excellency monsieur Girard into the Delaware, should rejoin him.

Lieutenant-colonel Hamilton, who was well informed of our situation and of my sentiments on every point, was instructed to give the admiral a full and accurate state of facts, and to acquaint him what aid, and how far we could co-operate with him in case of an attempt either against New-York or Rhode-Island; and also to obtain his ideas of the plan and system which he might think ought to be pursued, and to agree with him on certain signals.

Previous to my dispatching Mr. Hamilton, from the information I received on my enquiries respecting the navigation at the Hook, I was led to suspect (however interesting and desirable the destruction or capture of the British fleet might be) that it was not sufficient to introduce the count's ships. Under this apprehension, I wrote general Sullivan on the seventeenth by express, that an expedition might take place in a short time against Rhode-Island, and urged him at the same time to apply to the states of Massachusetts, Rhode-Island and Connecticut, for as many men as would augment his force

to five thousand, and also to make every possible preparation of boats, provision, pilots, &c. as if the event was fixed and certain.

From this time till about twelve o'clock on Sunday, the troops continued passing the river, when I crossed with the last division. On Monday afternoon I arrived at this place, in the neighborhood of which, the right and left wing encamped that night, with the second line a few miles in their rear. And here I am happy to add that their passage across the river was effected without any accident, or without any more delay than necessarily attended the work.

Being persuaded now from the conversation which I have had with several pilots and masters of vessels, of character, as well as from the accounts of other gentlemen, and Colonel Laurens's report on his return, that the passing of the count's ships by the Hook would be extremely precarious, if not impracticable,—I determined yesterday (which was as soon as it could be done), without waiting for further intelligence upon the subject, to put two brigades under marching orders. They accordingly marched this morning at two o'clock, for Rhode-Island, under the particular command of generals Varnum and Glover respectively, and both under the direction, for the present, of the marquis De la Fayette. A water conveyance was thought of, and wished for the ease of the troops: but, on consideration of all circumstances, such as the difficulty of providing vessels, the change and precariousness of the winds, the risk from the enemy's ships, &c. their route by land was deemed by far the more eligible.—The force with general Sullivan, from the best and latest advice I have been able to obtain, is about three thousand.—A detachment under Colonel Jackson will follow Varnum's and Glover's brigades.

The inclosed papers, No. 1, respecting eight persons sent from Bennington, and ordered into the enemy's lines, came to hand yesterday. About the same time I received a letter from Governor Clinton, containing a petition by the prisoners, and a letter from the committee of Albany, all remonstrating against the proceeding. As this is a matter in which I have no authority to act, nor in which I would wish to intermeddle, I take the liberty of referring it to Congress that they may decide upon it.—The prisoners are at West-Point, and ordered to be detained there for the present.

I would also take the liberty of transmitting to Congress a letter from Captain Gibbs, and of recommending him to their consideration. His letter was to have been sent by the Baron

Steuben before we marched from Valley-Forge: but his declining to go to Yorktown at that time, and our move through the Jerseys, delayed its being done. The captain has been in the army from the commencement of the war, and in the capacities which he mentions.—When Congress were pleased to honor me with the appointment of officers for the sixteen additional battalions, I offered to make some provision for him: but this he declined, preferring to remain in my family. The guard he originally commanded consisted of fifty men; but, since the arrival of baron Steuben, it has been augmented to a hundred and fifty. The baron advised that there should be a select corps of this number, to receive the manœuvres in the first instance, and to act as a model to the army; and proposed that it should be formed of the old guard company, and draughts from the line.—I presume, if it should be Congress's pleasure, a majority would be highly acceptable to the captain, and that it is as much as he expects.

Eleven o'clock, P. M.—I this moment received a letter from colonel Hamilton, who is on his return to the army, dated the twentieth at Black-point. He informs that the count D'Estaing would sail the next evening for Rhode-Island, being convinced from actual soundings that he could not enter his ships. He was anxiously waiting the arrival of the Chimère, but, at all events, meant to sail at the time he mentions. The admiral has agreed on signals with Mr. Hamilton.—Immediately after this letter came to hand, my aid, Mr. Laurens, set out for Providence, having many things to communicate to general Sullivan upon the subject of his co-operation, which neither time nor propriety would suffer me to commit to paper. General Sullivan is directed not to confine the number of his troops to five thousand, but to augment it, if he shall judge it necessary to insure his success.

I was informed by Mr. Laurens, that the count D'Estaing's magazine of bread is not so large as he could wish, and that in the course of a few weeks he shall be in want. This circumstance I thought it right to mention: and I should suppose that any quantity of biscuit may be provided in a little time at Philadelphia.

The inclosures, No. 2, are copies of three letters from myself to the admiral.—I flatter myself that the present of stock which I directed for him on his first arrival, in behalf of the states, will be approved by Congress.

The accounts from the western frontiers of Tryon county are distressing. The spirit of the savages seems to be roused, and they

they appear determined on mischief and havoc in every quarter.—By a letter from governor Clinton, of the twenty-first, they have destroyed Springfield and Andreas town, and are marching towards the settlements on the west branch of the Delaware. These incursions are extremely embarrassing to our other affairs, and I think, will justify a conclusion that sir Henry Clinton's intention was to operate up the North-river.—Whether it may have changed with circumstances cannot be determined.

I have detached the fourth Pennsylvania regiment and the remains of Morgan's corps, under lieutenant-colonel Butler, and also colonel Graham with a York state regiment, to co-operate with the militia, and to check the Indians, if possible. Colonel Butler is an enterprising good officer, and well acquainted with the savage mode of warfare: and I am persuaded whatever comes within the compass of his force and abilities, will be done.

I have the honor to be, &c. G. W.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, White-Plains, July 26, 1778.

THE baron De Steuben will have the honor of delivering you this. I am extremely sorry that this gentleman's situation and views seem to have determined him to quit the service, in which he has been heretofore and is capable still of being extensively useful. Some discontents, which arose among the officers on account of the powers with which the office was at first vested, induced me to arrange the duties of it upon a plan different from that on which it began. The moving state of the army has for some time past, in a great degree, suspended the exercise of the inspectorate. When the troops marched from Brunswic, the scarcity of general officers,—most of them being engaged with the court-martial either as members or witnesses,—occasioned my giving the baron a temporary command of a division during the march. On our arrival near our present encampment, I intended he should relinquish this charge, and resume his former office, for which purpose a general order was accordingly issued. But I find that he is entirely disinclined to the measure, and resolves not to continue in the service unless he can hold an actual command in the line.

Justice concurring with inclination constrains me to testify that the baron has in every instance discharged the several trusts

trusts reposed in him with great zeal and ability, so as to give him the fullest title to my esteem, as a brave, indefatigable, judicious, and experienced officer.—I regret there should be a necessity that his services should be lost to the army: at the same time I think it my duty explicitly to observe to Congress, that his desire of having an actual and permanent command in the line cannot be complied with, without wounding the feelings of a number of officers whose rank and merits give them every claim to attention; and that the doing it would be productive of much dissatisfaction and extensive ill consequences. This does not proceed from any personal objections on the part of those officers against the baron:—on the contrary, most of them, whom I have heard speak of him, express a high sense of his military worth. It proceeds from motives of another nature, which are too obvious to need particular explanation, or may be summed up in this, that they conceive such a step would be injurious to their essential rights and just expectations.—That this would be their way of thinking upon the subject, I am fully convinced, from the effect which the temporary command given him, even under circumstances so peculiar as those I have mentioned, produced:—the strongest symptoms of discontent appeared upon the occasion.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, White-Plains, July 28, 1778.

THIS will be presented to Congress by general Putnam. He arrived from Connecticut the day after I came into the neighborhood of this camp.—As I have not received any resolution of Congress respecting the court of inquiry which they directed, and which was transmitted them, on the subject of the posts in the Highlands taken last year, I am at a loss in what point of view to consider him.—He wishes some decision in this instance; and his journey to Philadelphia is for that purpose.—I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, White-Plains, August 3, 1778.

I DO myself the honor of transmitting to Congress a copy of a letter from general Knox, and of sundry observations and remarks on the ordnance establishment of the eleventh of February, which I received about the time we marched from

Valley-

Valley-Forge. These would have been transmitted before, had it not been for the moving state of the army, and a variety of other objects which engrossed my attention.—We have found by experience that some inconveniences have resulted from the establishment, which I conceive have proceeded principally from the total independence of the commissary-general of military stores on the commanding officer of artillery. It seems some alterations are necessary: and what they shall be, Congress will be pleased to determine.

It is not without reluctance that I am constrained to renew my importunities on the subject of the committee of arrangement. The present unsettled state of the army is productive of so much dissatisfaction and confusion, and of such a variety of disputes, that almost the whole of my time is now employed in finding temporary and inadequate expedients to quiet the minds of the officers, and keep business on a tolerable sort of footing. Not an hour passes without new applications and new complaints about rank: and, for want of a proper adjustment of this and many other essential points, our affairs are in a most irksome and injurious train. We can scarcely form a court-martial or parade a detachment in any instance, without a warm discussion on the subject of precedence; and there are several good officers now who are forced to decline duty, to prevent disputes, and their being commanded by others who upon every principle are their inferiors, unless their having obtained commissions before them (from the opportunities they had of making earlier applications, from local circumstances) should be considered sufficient to give them a superior claim.—There are many other causes of dissatisfaction on this head: but I will not enter into a minute relation of them. I sincerely wish that the gentlemen appointed, or such others as Congress may think proper to nominate for the occasion, would immediately repair to camp:—the present opportunity is favorable for reducing matters to system and order; and, from painful experience, I know there is an absolute necessity for it.

I should also hope that Congress will excuse me for mentioning again the necessity there is for appointing some brigadiers. The Massachusetts, by the resignation of general Learned, wants one: Pennsylvania, as general Hand is not here, has but one with the army: Maryland, which has two large brigades in the field, has only general Smallwood; and the North-Carolina troops, since the departure of general McIntosh, have been without any.—As I had taken the liberty upon a former occasion to offer my sentiments to Congress and their committee
upon

upon this subject, I should not trouble them now, if I was not more and more convinced that the service required promotions in this line. The frequent changes which take place among the officers, where there are no brigadiers, are attended with great inconvenience and detriment; and they are an effectual bar to the introduction of discipline. In such cases, the officers know that their command is but temporary, always liable to cease; and therefore they do not find themselves sufficiently interested to promote order and subordination; nor will the rest look up to them with that respect and deference which are essential. Every day's experience proves this, and shews beyond question that the affairs of a brigade can never be in a right train without a brigadier or some general officer to direct them.—It is certain these appointments, at the first view, will add a little to the list of expense: but in the end they will be a great saving, and produce many important advantages.—We are also a good deal distressed at this time for major-generals. However, as this arises more from the peculiar circumstances and situation of many which prevent them from duty in the line, than from a deficiency in the number appointed, I shall not add upon the occasion.

There is another branch of the army, which, in my opinion, calls loudly for the appointment of a general officer, and this is the cavalry.—For want of a proper regulating head in this corps, the whole has been in confusion, and of but very little service; whereas, under a right management, it might be most useful. The principal officers in it do not harmonise; which circumstance, with their disputes about rank, would (were there no other objections) effectually prevent the corps from rendering the public the services they have a right to expect, and of which it should be capable. To promote any gentleman now in it to a general command, would not be acquiesced in by the rest,—nor do I know that any of them wish it;—and it would increase their misunderstanding, and, of course, disorder.

I mean to draw all the horse immediately together, when I trust they will be under the direction of a general officer appointed by Congress for the purpose. Who he shall be, will remain solely with them to determine. However, I will take the liberty to add that he should be intelligent, active, attentive; and, as far as I can judge, general Cadwallader or general Reed would fill the post with great honor and advantage; though it would seem, from the seat the latter has taken in Congress, and from his late appointment to the council of Pennsylvania, as if he had declined every military view. The abi-

lities

ilities of these gentlemen, as well as their attachment, are generally known; and I am led to believe that either would be as acceptable to the corps as any person that can be found. Indeed I have learned as much from two of the colonels.

I have been waiting with the most impatient anxiety to hear of count D'Estaing's arrival at Rhode-Island; but as yet I have not been so happy. My last intelligence from thence is a letter from general Sullivan, dated at ten o'clock in the forenoon of the twenty-seventh, when he had no advice of the fleet.—He was in high spirits; and, from the preparation in which matters were, he entertained the most flattering hopes of success in the intended enterprise.—The brigades of Varnum and Glover, with Jackson's detachment, would arrive, I expect, on the second instant.

As the army was encamped, and there was no great prospect of a sudden removal, I judged it advisable to send general Greene to the eastward on wednesday last, being fully persuaded his services, as well in the quarter-master line as in the field, would be of material importance in the expedition against the enemy in that quarter. He is intimately acquainted with the whole of that country, and besides he has an extensive interest and influence in it. And, in justice to general Greene, I take occasion to observe that the public is much indebted to him for his judicious management and active exertions in his present department. When he entered upon it, he found it in a most confused, distracted, and destitute state. This, by his conduct and industry, has undergone a very happy change, and such as enabled us with great facility to make a sudden move with the whole army and baggage from Valley-Forge in pursuit of the enemy, and to perform a march to this place. In a word, he has given the most general satisfaction, and his affairs carry much the face of method and system.—I also consider it as an act of justice to speak of the conduct of colonel Wadsworth, commissary-general. He has been indefatigable in his exertions, to provide for the army; and, since his appointment, our supplies of provision have been good and ample.

August 4.—At seven o'clock in the evening yesterday, I received the inclosed letter from general Sullivan, with one addressed to myself, a copy of which I do myself the pleasure of forwarding.—I am exceedingly happy in the count's arrival, and that things wear so pleasing an aspect.

There is another subject on which I must take the liberty of addressing Congress, which is that of the clothier's department. I am perfectly satisfied, that, unless this very important and interesting

interesting office is put under better regulations, the army will never be clothed. * * * I believe both officers and men, particularly the latter, have suffered greater inconveniences and distresses than soldiers ever did before, for want of clothing; and that this has not flowed more from a real scarcity of articles, than a want of proper exertions and provident management to procure them.—It is essential that something should be done, and immediately, to place the department on a better footing. We have now a great many men entirely destitute of shirts and breeches, and I suppose not less than a fourth or fifth of the whole here who are without shoes. From the deficiencies in this line, numbers of desertions have proceeded,—not to mention deaths; and, what is still worse, the troops which remain, and see themselves in rags, want that spirit and pride necessary to constitute the soldier.

I have been informed by several officers, and by such as I can depend on, that many of the late draughts are willing and desirous of enlisting during the war. I do not conceive myself at liberty to give direction on the point, and therefore submit it to Congress to decide. However, if they can be engaged for the usual bounties allowed by the continent, after proper precautions are taken to prevent fraud, I think the measure will be expedient.—It is true, our affairs have an agreeable aspect at present: but the war may continue, and we—want men. A third of the time of some of them, and a half in the case of others, is already expired; and, as they will rise in their views, and become more difficult in proportion as their service draws to a conclusion,—if the step is considered advisable, the sooner we attempt to enlist, the better in all probability will the work succeed.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

White-Plains, August 7, 1778.

YESTERDAY afternoon I had the honor to receive your favor of the thirtieth ultimo.—Major Gibbs is now at Rhode-Island. I shall embrace the first safe opportunity to transmit him your letter and the commission with which Congress have been pleased to honor him.

Since my letter of the third and fourth instant, I have received no advices from general Sullivan, so that I can give no information of our operations against the enemy in the eastern quarter.—I am told the militia of Massachusetts and Connecticut

medicut were collecting fast, and proceeding to reinforce him. I have the pleasure to acquaint Congress that major-general Lincoln arrived here yesterday, and that he is happily so far recovered from his wound, as to be able to take his command in the line.

The inclosed paper from New-York came to hand last night. It contains an account of the fire which unfortunately broke out in the city on Sunday night, and of the damage which was occasioned by it. It also contains the latest advices that I have seen from Britain, and such as appear to be interesting.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Camp, August 7, 1778, ten o'clock, P. M.

SINCE I had the honor of addressing you to-day, I received letters from count D'Estaing, and my aid, lieutenant-colonel Laurens. These contain the latest advices I have from Rhode-Island,—of which I do myself the pleasure of transmitting copies by this conveyance.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

White-Plains, August 11, 1778.

I TAKE the liberty of transmitting to Congress the inclosed letter which I just now received from the paymaster-general. They will perceive by it that the military chest is entirely exhausted, and that a third of the army remains unpaid for the months of April and May. The importance and necessity of an immediate and large supply will at once appear; and I am persuaded it will be ordered and forwarded with all possible expedition.

Since I had the honor of writing by colonel Heth on Sunday last, I have not received any advices from Rhode-Island.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, White-Plains, August 13, 1778.

I HAVE the honor to transmit you a letter from general Sullivan, which, from the tardiness of the expresses, is but just come to hand. I suppose it gives Congress the same information communicated to me: but, lest there should be any parti-

culars mentioned in his letter to me which may not be contained in the one to you, I am induced to accompany the latter with a copy of the former.

The papers sent from Congress to head-quarters, and returned, respecting the case of major-general St. Clair, will be wanted immediately, as it is probable his trial will now very speedily come on.

I beg you will excuse the trouble I give you in requesting you will favor me, in your next, with copies of the resolve of Congress for raising the regiment of attillery in Virginia and appointing colonel Harrison to the command of it,—and of another, passed the latter end of seventy-six, for raising three battalions of continental attillery. Some disputes about rank have arisen, which make these resolutions necessary; and it happens that my papers of that period are absent.

With the utmost respect, I have the honor to be, &c. G. W.
P. S. I request you will be pleased to forward the inclosed to Mr. Sergeant without delay.

[The following letter, without date, appears to have been written about the fifteenth of August, 1778.]

Sir,

MR. Fuhrer and Mr. Kleinsmit have lately left the British lines, and come in to us.—The account they give of themselves is this, that they had been first lieutenants in the Hessian corps, were taken prisoners at Trenton, resided during their captivity at Dumfries in Virginia, were lately exchanged, and have since resigned their commissions:—that having solicited permission to come out from the enemy, and refused, they determined to leave them at all hazards, and have now put their design in execution.—The circumstances of their captivity are known to several officers in our army.

They are desirous of entering into our service, observing that there are a number of German officers in the same disposition with themselves, who will resign and join us, if they find that these meet with proper countenance.—It appears to me that important advantages may attend the encouraging a disposition of this nature (if it really exists,—which is far from being impossible) from the influence it will necessarily have upon the soldiery by increasing that spirit of desertion and discontent which already prevails among them.

Congress

Congress will best judge of the propriety of employing these gentlemen.—I have been thinking in what manner it might be done; and the mode least exceptionable, which at present occurs to me, is to authorize them to raise a corps for themselves, by enlisting such German inhabitants, and such deserters from the foreign troops, as may be willing to engage. The corps at first, as it is only by way of experiment, need not be large, but may be afterwards increased as circumstances shall point out. This measure, I apprehend, cannot be attended with any material inconvenience, and may be productive of utility. If the gentlemen are employed at all, it must be in a new corps, as they could not be introduced into any of those already formed, without injuring the officers in them, and producing dissatisfaction, murmurs, and resignations.

I have founded them on the plan here suggested, and they seem to be very sanguine in its success, and anxious to undertake it.—They expect some augmentation in rank; and indeed it seems necessary, in order the more effectually to interest others to follow their example: but caution should be used not to carry the idea too far; because, besides other weighty considerations, the higher the rank conferred on them, the more difficult it will be to provide for those who may hereafter come to us, and who will of course frame their expectations by comparison.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

P. S. An additional grade, to the rank they held in the corps they come from, will, in my opinion, be sufficient.

SIR, *Head-Quarters, White-Plains, August 16, 1778.*

I TAKE the liberty, by the conveyance now offered me by captain Riley, to transmit to Congress the proceedings of the court-martial in the case of major-general Lee.

The inclosed papers comprehend a request by general Phillips for an officer to go to Canada by way of the lakes, on the subject of clothing for the convention troops. I do not conceive myself at liberty to answer general Heath upon the point, who referred it to me; and request that Congress will favor me with their direction as soon as they conveniently can, that I may enable him to satisfy general Phillips respecting it.

I have not received a single tittle of intelligence from Rhode-Island since general Sullivan's letter of the tenth, a copy of which I transmitted in mine of the thirteenth. I am extremely anxious to hear from thence, and of count D'Etraing's safe arrival

arrival in port: the moment I do, I shall do myself the honor to advise Congress.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

Sir, *Head-Quarters, White-Plains, Aug. 18, 1778.*

SINCE I had the honor of addressing you to-day by captain Riley, I received a letter from general Sullivan, a copy of which you have inclosed. From this it appears the count D'Estaing had not returned with his squadron on the thirteenth instant: and there is reason to fear, from the violence of the weather ever since, that he has not yet got in.—This accident has much deranged our views, and I shall be happy if it does not totally defeat our enterprise against Rhode-Island.—I feel much for the count. He has been peculiarly unfortunate in the combination of several untoward circumstances to frustrate his plans.

The letter addressed to you accompanied mine from general Sullivan. They were both delivered at the same instant; and through inadvertence I broke the seal of yours. Before I had opened it, I discovered the mistake; and the contents have not been seen. This relation, I trust, will apologise for the measure.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

P. S. Your favor of the thirteenth has come to hand.

Sir, *Head-Quarters, White-Plains, August 19, 1778.*

I DO myself the honor to transmit you a copy of a letter from general Sullivan, dated the seventeenth instant, which I just now received, with the letter inclosed.—It appears that count D'Estaing was still out with his fleet, but yet that the general was in high spirits, and in the strongest hopes of success. I flatter myself they are well grounded, and that in the course of a few days he will announce the entire reduction of the enemy's force on the island.

The declaration respecting governor Johnston has been sent by a flag to the British commissioners.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

Head-

Sir,

Head-Quarters, White-Plains, August 21, 1778.

// YOUR favor of the sixteenth, with the several papers to which it referred, came duly to hand on wednesday afternoon.

I this minute received from general Sullivan the letter I have now the honor of forwarding you, with one addressed to myself. A copy of the latter is also inclosed.—The general seems to have been near the enemy's lines, and on the point of opening all his batteries. Things appear to be in a promising train.

By advices from an officer of rank and intelligence who is stationed with a party in Monmouth county, I am informed that sixteen ships entered the Hook on the seventeenth,—one having a flag; and that, on that and the preceding day, a heavy cannonade was heard at sea.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

Sir,

Head-Quarters, White-Plains, August 21, 1778.

I DO myself the honor of transmitting to Congress the inclosed memorial of colonel Rawlings, presented in behalf of himself and the Maryland officers who were under his command in the year 1776. The facts which are stated in it are generally true; and I cannot but feel myself exceedingly interested in favor of these gentlemen. The conduct of this whole corps, when Fort-Mifflin was attacked, is so generally known and approved, that it is almost unnecessary to add upon the subject. However I think it but justice to observe that every representation of that day's transaction gave them the highest credit.—They fought with a degree of veteran bravery; and, though but a handful, they maintained their ground a considerable time, notwithstanding the most vigorous efforts to force them. All who were spectators upon the occasion have declared this; and the enemy themselves have not refused them applause.

It seems hard that officers of their merit should be overlooked;—and a loss to the service that they should remain unemployed: but the consequences that would attend their incorporation with any of the corps now existing appear too disagreeable, to try the experiment. Colonel Rawlings himself, from the information I have had, does not incline to give any uneasiness to the line of the army, and would rather make a distant part of it against the Indians, in case he could be provided for in that way. Captain Beall, who is charged with this, will be able to inform Congress more fully than I can of the wishes of

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the colonel and the rest of his officers; and his account may lead perhaps to some suitable and practicable provision for them. As I have observed before, they are men who deserve well of their country.—I only mention the Maryland officers upon this occasion, because that part of the corps which came from Virginia was provided for by the state in their present arrangement, as I have been credibly advised.

Mr. Rawlings was never in the complete and actual command of the regiment under his direction as colonel, because he never obtained a commission: but he became entitled to it according to the then common rule of promotion by the death of colonel Stephenson, and the non-acceptance of colonel Morgan who was appointed to it. Of the latter circumstance Mr. Rawlings, I am persuaded, was never apprised, as it was kept a secret from an apprehension that the enemy might claim an officer of the rank of colonel in exchange for Morgan who was then a prisoner on parole, if his promotion came to their knowledge.—Major Williams of the Maryland part of the corps was appointed by the state to one of her regiments now in the field, and is the only officer in his predicament I know of, that they arranged.

I have the honor to be, &c. G. W.

SIR, *Head-Quarters, White-Plains, August 24, 1778.*

I HAD yesterday the honor to receive your favor of the twentieth instant.—I take the liberty of transmitting you a copy of a letter which this minute came to hand from general Sullivan, advising of the count D'Estaing's arrival. He omitted to inclose the admiral's letter to which he refers; and therefore I can give no further intelligence than what the copy contains.—From the suffering of the fleet, the storm must have been exceedingly severe at sea.

I also inclose two York papers of the nineteenth and twentieth. I here mention an engagement off Sandy-Hook on the sixteenth. It could only have been partial on the side of the French squadron at any rate, as the Languedoc and the seventy-four-gun ships must have lost their masts before that time.—It would seem by the account given in the papers, that the Isis and some other ships on the part of the enemy had been damaged.

I have the honor to be, &c. G. W.

Head-

Head-Quarters, White-Plains, August 25, 1778.

SIR, INCLOSED you will be pleased to receive a copy of a letter of the twenty-third instant from general Sullivan, which came to hand about half after three o'clock this morning, with the several papers to which it refers, copies of which are also transmitted. By these, Congress will perceive our prospects are much changed with respect to the operations against Rhode-Island; and that the issue, as things are now circumstanced,—whether we look to a continuation of the siege, to an immediate attack, or a retreat,—must be attended with great difficulty and risk.—I trust the wisest measures will be pursued; and I will hope for the best.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

P. S. General Sullivan, I think, must be under a mistake as to the amount of the relief which the enemy had attempted to give from York.—I have used every possible means to gain information from time to time on this head; and I never could learn, either from deserters or others who had been in the city, that any troops had embarked since the reinforcement sent up the Sound long ago, except some draughts to act in the fleet as marines.

*Head-Quarters, White-Plains, August 31, 1778,
three o'clock, P. M.*

SIR, I WOULD take the liberty to inform Congress that colonel Armand is come to camp with his corps, and has applied to me for commissions for his officers.—By the resolution for establishing the corps, it was to be officered out of the foreigners then commissioned in our service, who were not nor could be provided for in any of the regiments. Instead of this, there are only three officers in the corps who before held any commissions in our service, viz. lieutenant-colonel Vigney, and captains Mercley and Shafner. The two last were only lieutenants, and are now appointed to captaincies, contrary (it seems to me) to the spirit and intention of the resolution.

As colonel Armand has departed from his instructions which must govern me, I am not authorised to grant the commissions he requires, and am therefore under the necessity of troubling Congress with the arrangement of the corps, No. 1, as it now actually stands for their consideration and decision.—The colonel founds his deviation from the resolve upon some verbal intimation

information given him that the part in question would not be insisted on.

I would also take the liberty to mention that general Du Portail lately delivered me a memorial, in which, among other things, he represents that he had made an agreement with Congress at his first appointment, that neither himself nor the other gentlemen with him should be commanded by any of the engineers who had preceded them in our army.—I could not but answer that the commissions of officers were the only rule of precedence and command I had to judge by; and, while others held superior appointments, I must consider them accordingly in the course of service. He gave me the inclosed letter to you upon the subject, and is extremely anxious to have the matter placed upon a certain footing: and, no doubt, it will be for the good and tranquility of the service that the claim be determined as speedily as possible one way or the other. At the same time I think it right to observe that it cannot be expected that colonel Cosciusko, who has been a good while in this line, and conducted himself with reputation and satisfaction, will consent to act in a subordinate capacity to any of the French gentlemen except general Du Portail.

Since I had the honor of writing you on the twenty-fifth instant, I have not received a single line from general Sullivan. The only intelligence I have from the eastward is from monsieur Pontjebau. This gentleman left Rhode-Island the twenty-seventh, and arrived about two hours ago in camp. From him I learn that our people were still on the island;—that it was generally thought they had made effectual provision for a retreat in case of exigency;—that in the evening of that day he met monsieur Preville, an officer belonging to the Languedoc, at Providence, going with dispatches to general Sullivan, who informed him that the French fleet had got into Boston.—He further adds that monsieur Calonne who was in company with him at Providence, and who had more conversation with monsieur Preville than he himself had, told him that monsieur Preville said count D'Estaing had failed or was on the point of sailing again for Rhode-Island with ten ships of the line and his frigates.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

P. S. Your favor of the twentieth only came to hand just now.

Head.

Head-Quarters, White-Plains, September 1, 1778,
 eleven o'clock, A. M.

SIR,

I DO myself the honor of transmitting you a copy of a letter I this minute received from general Sullivan.—I congratulate Congress on the repulse of the enemy, and only wish our troops may be able to effect a retreat, which seems the most eligible measure they can pursue in the present situation of things.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, White-Plains, Sept. 4, 1778.

I HAVE been duly honored with your favor of the twenty-eighth and that of the thirtieth ultimo, with the several inclosures to which they refer.

Congress may rely that I will use every possible means in my power to conciliate any differences that may have arisen in consequence of the count D'Estaing's going to Boston, and to prevent a publication of the protest upon the occasion.—Several days before the receipt of the resolution, I had written to the eastward, urging the necessity of harmony, and the expediency of affording the admiral every assistance to refit his ships. This I repeated after the resolution came to hand; and I have also taken opportunity to request all the general officers here to place the matter in the most favorable point of view whenever they hear it mentioned.

The five hundred guineas, which Congress were pleased to order, came safe to hand, and shall be appropriated to the purposes they intended, and as the exigency of the service may require.—For want of supplies of this sort, we have been very deficient in intelligence in many important and interesting points. In some cases, no consideration in paper money has been found sufficient to effect even an engagement to procure it: and, where it has been otherwise, the terms of service, on account of the depreciation, have been high, if not exorbitant.

The design of the enemy, as to their future movements, remain yet entirely [*in the dark*]: but the expectation of their leaving the continent is daily decreasing. The hurricane season seems opposed to their going to the West-Indies; and the passage to Europe in a little time will become more and more dangerous. Besides these, there is another circumstance, of

some weight, if true, to induce a belief that they mean to stay. It appears by the papers that part of the regiments lately raised in Britain are ordered to Halifax. If the troops here were intended to be recalled, it would seem that some of them would be sent to reinforce that garrison sooner than troops from England or Scotland; and hence I think it may be presumed that another campaign will take place in America, especially if administration are disappointed in their expectations from the commission.

Where the theatre of war may be, must be a matter of conjecture. But, as it is an acknowledged fact that an army acting in the eastern states must derive flour for its support from those more western, I submit to Congress the expediency, and, in my opinion, the necessity, of establishing, without loss of time, magazines of this article at convenient places (removed from the Sound) in Connecticut and Massachusetts. I am the more induced to wish an early consideration of this point, as, by a sudden move of the army, (should events make it necessary) the departments of commissary and quarter-master would be greatly distressed. Nor would such magazines, I should imagine, be attended with any considerable loss, though the army should not operate in that quarter, as the flour would answer occasionally for our shipping, and the surplus might in all probability be otherwise readily disposed of.

I take the liberty of transmitting to Congress a memorial I received from the reverend Mr. Tetard. — From the certificates annexed to it, he appears to be a man of great merit; and from every account, he has suffered in the extreme in the present contest. His attachment, services, and misfortunes, seem to give him a claim to a generous notice: but, according to the new establishment of the army, it is not in my power to make any provision for him. I therefore recommend his case to the attention and consideration of Congress.

Six o'clock, P. M. — I this minute received a letter from general Sullivan, of which the inclosure, No. 2, is a copy. I shall be exceedingly happy if a perfect reconciliation has taken place between him and the count and all the officers. — His letter will shew some of the reasons that led to the protest, and that it was the hope of our officers that it would have operated as a justification to the admiral, to return against the sentiments of his council, especially as it coincided (as it is said) with his own inclination. — I had these reasons from another hand when the protest first came.

September

September 5.—I was duly honored yesterday evening with your favor of the thirty-first ultimo.—Though it is not expressed in the resolution of that date that any other bounty is to be given to the men who engage for three years or during the war, than twenty dollars, I shall take it for granted they are to receive the usual allowances of clothing and land.—There are several continental troops whose time of service will expire at the end of the fall or during the winter. I shall consider these within the meaning and operation of the resolve, though they are not mentioned; and shall direct every necessary measure to be taken to re-enlist them.

From the exorbitant state, town, and substitute bounties, I am very doubtful whether twenty dollars will be found sufficient to engage so great a proportion either of the draughts or continentals, as was at first apprehended. Our failure in the enterprise against Rhode-Island will have its weight; and every day, from the approach of the fall and winter, will add new difficulties. As it is a work of the most essential importance, I will order it to be begun the instant the money arrives: and, lest, on experiment, the sum should prove too small, I would submit it to Congress whether it will not be expedient to pass another resolve, authorising a further bounty of ten dollars, to be used as circumstances may make it necessary. This can remain a secret, and will not be carried into execution but in case of evident necessity.—I feel very much interested upon the occasion, and have submitted this mode, that there may not be the least possible delay in attempting to engage the men under a second expedient if the first should not succeed.—The articles of clothing and blankets should also employ the utmost attention to provide them: we are now in great want, particularly of the latter; there not being less than actually wanted at this moment.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

P. S. The return of blankets has not come in; and therefore I cannot ascertain the deficiency by this conveyance.

SIR, *Head-Quarters, White-Plains, September 4, 1778.*

I HAD the pleasure to hear this morning, by a letter from general Sullivan, of the thirty-first ultimo, that he had effected a retreat to the main, the preceding night, without any loss either of men or stores. As he has written to Congress fully upon the subject, and I feel their anxiety to hear it,

it, I shall not detain major Morris longer than to observe that I think the retreat a most fortunate, lucky, and well-timed event.

Major Morris informs me he has heard that lord Howe was off Boston with his fleet: and it appears by a New-York paper of the second, that rear admiral Parker arrived at Sandy-Hook on this day week with six ships of the line, of seventy four guns each,—which is corroborated by other accounts.—I transmitted the intelligence to his excellency count D'Estaing yesterday and the day before, as it acquired more and more the appearance of certainty,—as I have regularly done every occurrence interesting to his fleet and our operations.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, White-Plains, Sept. 7, 1778.

I TAKE the liberty of laying before Congress the inclosed copies of a paragraph and schedule contained in a letter from general Heath, which I lately received. These will apprise Congress, if they are not already informed, of the supplies of provision and wood wanted by the count D'Estaing, and will naturally lead to a consideration of the ways and means to be pursued for furnishing them as soon as possible.

Since I had the honor of addressing you on the fourth and fifth instant, I have obtained a return of the blankets which are now deficient. This, and the fast approach of the fall, will suggest the necessity of the most vigorous exertions being used to procure them. Not a night will pass from this time without the soldiers feeling the want.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, White-Plains, Sept. 12, 1778.

I DO myself the honor of returning to Congress the report of their committee on the subject of an inspectorship (transmitted in your letter of the twentieth ultimo, which was not received till the thirty-first), with such observations as have occurred to me in considering the matter, and which I have made with a freedom that I trust will be agreeable to Congress. I wish it had been in my power to have returned it before: but the intervention of a variety of other important business from

time

time to time obliged me to postpone a conclusion upon the points till yesterday.

I have already, in my letter of the twenty-sixth of July, delivered my sentiments upon the consequences that would attend the baron Steuben's being appointed to an actual and permanent command in the line; and therefore I will not trouble Congress with a repetition of them. However, I will take the liberty to add that I am more and more convinced that what I then said upon the occasion was well founded; and that I am certain such a measure will produce at least infinite discontents and inquietudes among the general officers.

I have also had the honor to receive your favor of the fifth instant, with the several papers to which it refers. These shall have my attention as far as practicable.—I hope all the confederate troops are on the march from Philadelphia; and, if they are not, that immediate orders will be given for their joining the army.

The inclosed copy of a letter from general Sullivan, of the tenth instant, will inform Congress that the enemy have not relinquished their burning plans, and that in this way they have destroyed several houses, stores, and vessels, at and near Bedford.

I was advised on wednesday night that a body of them, consisting of four or five thousand, under general Grey, had made a landing in that quarter, and were intrenching. In consequence of this, and from an apprehension that general Clinton might possibly mean to operate to the eastward, and form some project in concert with lord Howe against the count D'Estaing's squadron, I determined to move the troops from this ground to a rear position, better calculated to afford support to the works on the North-river, in case an attempt should be made against them, and at the same time more convenient for forwarding detachments to the eastward, if the enemy point their operations that way.

I was the more induced to come to this determination as most of the accounts from New-York seemed to lead to a belief, as they still do, that a considerable movement was and is in contemplation, if not an entire evacuation of the city, and this by water. Besides these reasons, the principal objects for taking post here do not now exist. One was to create every possible jealousy in favor of the expedition against Rhode-Island; another the consuming the forage within its vicinity and towards Kingsbridge. The former is now over, and the latter in a great degree accomplished.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.
Head-

Head-Quarters, near Fredericksburgh, September 23, 1778.

SIR,

SINCE I had the honor of addressing you on the twelfth instant, I have received your several favors of the tenth, twelfth and sixteenth, with the resolutions to which they allude.—I transmitted the British commissioners the resolve of the fourth instant respecting the convention troops the morning after it came to hand, and also wrote to sir Henry Clinton upon the subject of passports.—I have not received his answer.

With respect to the magazines, I have directed the commissary to form them on the inland communication from hence to Boston, at proper intervals. The twenty thousand barrels of flour that Congress have ordered to be purchased will be a valuable addition, if they can be transported by water: but it seems to me there will be great risk of its being lost, if it is sent by sea while the enemy have a superior fleet on our coast.

As the campaign is not closed yet, all our cavalry are of use.—They lie in the neighborhood of the enemy's posts, for the purpose of restraining their parties, and for obtaining and giving intelligence of the enemy's movements; and they are subsisted upon the forage which would otherwise be exposed to them.—I am sensible that these corps are attended with great expense; and the moment I think the service will admit of it, they or a part of them shall be quartered in different places distant from the army, where they may be provided for on better terms.—The price of forage, and the difficulty of getting it, are really objects of great magnitude, and such as should undergo some regulation, if there is any that can be adopted.—I received letters a few days ago from the commissary and quarter-master upon this subject, copies of which, and of my letter in consequence to the several states from Massachusetts-Bay to Pennsylvania inclusive, I take the liberty to inclose.

The resolution prohibiting officers, except such as are specially authorized, to keep horses in the army or within forty miles of it, has been published in orders, and I will take every step in my power to give it effect.

I have considered the practicability of reducing the teams employed in the army, and find, however desirable the object may be, that it cannot be done. We have not at this time more than are absolutely and indispensably necessary, nor so many as would be necessary in case of a rapid movement: neither does it appear to me that there can be a substitution of ox for horse teams,

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at least to any great extent; nor that any material advantages would arise from such a measure. There might perhaps be a small saving in the article of provender: but this, I fear, would be greatly over-balanced by the loss of cattle that would be appropriated to the use of the commissary's department. After a full investigation of the subject, I believe we shall be obliged to adhere to the kind of teams we now employ, and that the only relief we shall have in point of expense will arise from sending a part of the horses to places where they can more easily be foraged, when we have fixed our camp and quarters for the winter.

I beg leave to mention to Congress that there is a necessity of some mode's being established, by which claims on the old quarter-master ship, that remain unsatisfied, may be discharged. There are many of this nature; and these, however well authenticated they may be, the gentlemen now in office do not conceive themselves at liberty to adjust, without obtaining some special direction for the purpose. I am every day applied to for payment of such accounts, and, in many instances, have been obliged, as well for the sake of justice to individuals as for the public good, to order them to be taken up. It appears to me that Congress cannot be too early in their resolution upon this occasion, and that either the present department should be authorized to settle and pay such claims, or that some persons should be appointed and supplied with money for the purpose.

The army marched from White-Plains on the sixteenth instant, and is now encamped in different places.—Three brigades, composing the Virginia troops, part of the right wing, under the command of general Putnam, are at Robinson's near West-Point: and two brigades more, composing the remainder, are with baron De Kalb at Fishkill plains, about ten miles from the town, on the road lead leading to Sharon. The second line, with lord Stirling, is in the vicinity of Fredericksburg; and the whole of the left wing at Danbury under the command of general Gates.—These several posts appear to be the best we can occupy in the present doubtful state of things, as they have relation to the support of West-Point, in case of an attack in that quarter, and are also on the communication to the eastward, if the enemy point their operations that way.—Besides these dispositions, general Scott with a light corps remains below in the country about King's-Street.

The letter from sir Henry Clinton which I have the honor of transmitting was sent to me to-day by colonel Baylor who is posted at Hackinsac. He says he received one for me by the same flag; and, from his note, he supposed he had charged the horse-
man

man with it who just arrived at head-quarters. Through accident he forwarded yours to me; and I think it probable that you will be troubled with mine. If this should be the case, you will be so obliging as to return it to me by the first conveyance. I was also informed by colonel Baylor that a considerable body of the enemy landed at Paulus' Hook in the evening of the twenty-second, and were encamped that night in the woods between four and five miles from the town of Bergen. He had not learned their object: but it is likely they are after forage.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, Fredericksburg, Sept 29, 1778.

THE following is an extract of a letter of the seventeenth instant, which I had the honor to receive from the count D'Estaing.

"I entreat you to promote the exchange of prisoners already planned by monsieur Girard. The unhappy persons taken before the commencement of hostilities cannot be fully regarded as prisoners: their lot is dreadful. The mode adopted for exchanging them by means of your commissary, without introducing the king's name or mine into the transaction, removes a great part of the political difficulties which before subsisted."

I am an entire stranger to the plan above referred to, or to the mode that has been adopted for exchanging by means of our commissary. He is absent from the army: and I must therefore beg the favor of you to obtain from monsieur Girard such information as will enable me to give directions for carrying the count's desires into execution, if practicable.

The marquis De Vienne, at present at Boston, has requested a furlough of eighteen months to enable him to return to France, whither he is called by some domestic concerns. I do not conceive myself at liberty to grant his request without the permission of Congress, to whom I would beg leave to observe, that, if agreeable to them, he may be indulged without prejudice to the service, as he is not attached to any particular command.

I have just received an account from Jersey, which I fear is too true, that colonel Baylor's regiment of dragoons were surprised in their quarters the night before last, and most of them killed or taken. — A few of the stragglers have come in, who can give but a very imperfect account of the matter. They think

think the colonel and most of the officers were made prisoners, and that the privates were put to the sword.—There were, I imagine, about one hundred men of the regiment together when this unlucky accident happened.

The stay of the enemy in Jersey being longer than I apprehended, and not knowing what their real intentions may be, I have ordered general Maxwell to advance from Elizabethtown to the neighborhood of Aquakenunk bridge, and have sent over general Woodford's brigade from this side of the river. I have also ordered general Pulaski to advance with as much expedition as possible, and join the brigades.—Lord Stirling has this day gone over to take the command of the continental forces and militia who are assembling in considerable numbers. If the enemy mean only to forage, they will be kept from extending themselves, by these troops: and if they have any design upon the posts in the Highlands, they will be prevented from seizing the passes leading to the forts, by lord Stirling, who will be between them and the enemy, and always ready to possess them.

I have made proper dispositions on this side the river for the security of the Highlands in case that body of the enemy, who are on this side Kingsbridge employed in collecting forage, should advance.

The sketch of Rhode Island, forwarded by this express, was received from general Sullivan, and left behind by accident when the last dispatches were sent off.

I have had the honor of receiving yours of the twentieth, inclosing an order for count Pulaski's legion to advance to Trenton.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, Fishkill, October 3, 1778.

I AM honored with your favor of the twenty-seventh of September, with the inclosed resolves of Congress, a copy of which has been transmitted to major-general Lincoln for his information and direction.

Being separated from my papers, I am uncertain whether I mentioned in my last, that, the enemy in the Jerseys having received a reinforcement and made some forward movements, I had thought it expedient to detach another brigade thither to act in conjunction with the one already there together with Pulaski's corps and the militia, and had sent major-general

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lord Stirling to take the command of the whole;—that I had also ordered major-general Putnam across the river for the immediate security of West-Point, and moved a division of troops to this place, to be nearer that post.—I have since come here myself, and propose to remain till the views of the enemy on the Jerseys are decided; though I have had no reason to alter my opinion that nothing more than a forage is intended.—By the last accounts, they had drawn in their out-parties, and resumed their first bounds behind Hackinsac river, at the liberty-pole and Newbridge.

That part of Baylor's regiment which escaped came off in the first instance, and were afterwards brought off in so dispersed a manner that the number has not been ascertained: but, from what I have learned, I should estimate the loss at about fifty men and seventy horses.—Major Clough is dead of his wounds.—This affair seems to have been attended with every circumstance of cruelty.

It is a small compensation for this accident, that colonel Butler three or four days ago, with a party of infantry and horse comprehending major Lee's corps, surprised about a hundred Yagers below Tarrytown, killed ten on the spot, and took a lieutenant and eighteen men prisoners.—The roughness of the country facilitated the flight of the rest, and prevented the success being more complete.

The proceedings in the case of general St. Clair accompany this letter.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

P. S. I have received advice of the arrival of a packet from England.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, October 6, 1778.

THIS will be delivered to you by major-general the marquis De la Fayette.—The generous motives, which first induced him to cross the Atlantic and enter the army of the United States, are well known to Congress.—Reasons equally laudable now engage his return to France, which in her present circumstances claims his services.—His eagerness to offer his duty to his prince and country, however great, could not influence him to quit the continent in any stage of an unfinished campaign. He resolved to remain at least till the close of the present, and embraces this moment of suspense to communicate his wishes to Congress with a view of having the necessary arrangements made

made in time, and of being still within reach, should any occasion offer of distinguishing himself in the field.

The marquis at the same time, from a desire of preserving a relation with us, and a hope of having it yet in his power to be useful as an American officer, solicits only a furlough sufficient for the purposes above-mentioned.—A reluctance to part with an officer, who unites to all the military fire of youth an uncommon maturity of judgment, would lead me to prefer his being absent on this footing, if it depended on me. I shall always be happy to give such a testimony of his services as his bravery and conduct on all occasions entitle him to; and I have no doubt that Congress will add suitable expressions of their sense of his merit, and their regret on account of his departure.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

P. S. The marquis is so obliging as to take charge of a packet containing the proceedings of a court-martial in general Shuyler's case.

To the Board of War.

Head-Quarters, near Fredericksburg, October 11, 1778.

GENTLEMEN,

THE incessant and pressing applications of the officers, and their real distress for clothing, oblige me to repeat my wishes to the board, to obtain the earliest direction of Congress for relieving their wants.—They are in a very disagreeable situation in this respect; and, unless some mode can be adopted for speedily supplying them, many will be obliged involuntarily to quit the service; or, if this should not be the case, we shall be involved in perpetual complaints, and the most painful applications.

I do not recollect, when the army was first appointed, that there was any engagement on the part of the public that the officers should be provided with clothing through their means; nor has there been any explicit declaration since, that I remember, for the purpose: but the measure has become indispensably necessary; and, without the intervention of public aid, they never can be supplied: for their pay, if the articles proper could be found in a private way, (from the enormous and exorbitant prices now exacted for every thing) would prove wholly incompetent to the end.

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There is however a resolution of Congress, of the twenty-second of November last, which points to a provision through the public means and those of the states individually taken. This has encouraged the officers to look for supplies in the manner there professed; and their not being able to obtain them makes them more uneasy perhaps than if the resolution had never passed.

I have written to messieurs Otis and Andrews to make a return of the cloth, &c. in their hands, proper for officers, and also to advise me what quantities might be procured in case the board should direct a purchase. This appears to be the only practicable expedient at this time, from which relief can be drawn: and, if it is to be adopted, the agents cannot be too soon ordered to carry it into execution.—I really wish to be informed by the board by the first opportunity whether the officers may expect supplies through the public stores, that I may be able to answer them decisively upon the point when they apply. As matters now stand, I am in a very awkward and irksome situation.

Since it is evident that the officers cannot provide themselves with clothing, and that there is a necessity for the intervention of the public aid, I would submit it to the board whether it may not be proper for them to form an estimate of clothing, proportioned to the number of officers in the army, for the consideration of Congress, and to obtain their sanction for importing the same, if they approve the plan. This measure, it seems to me, is the only one that can ensure relief in future; and it appears the more eligible as the loss to the public will be infinitely less than if they procure the articles in the country, supposing that it could be done. Besides this consideration, the officers then might be properly uniformed and all placed on a just and equal footing.

If the board should be authorised to direct an immediate purchase of clothing for the officers, I will take the liberty to suggest that it may not be improper for them to enjoin on the part of the clothier a stricter compliance with the resolution of Congress, which I have mentioned, in the sale. The officers say that hitherto it has not had the necessary and generous operation intended by Congress; but, on the contrary, in the few instances in which they have been able to furnish themselves with articles from the public stores, that they have done it at the current exorbitant prices.—Indeed there are many matters in the department which require a more perfect and explicit arrangement than has ever been made; and at present there is such a
clashing

clashing of offices and officers that it is difficult to determine how or with whom business is to be transacted.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

Head-Quarters, near Fredericksburgh, October 14, 1778.

SIR,

SINCE I had the honor of addressing you on the sixth instant by favor of the marquis De la Fayette, I received your letter of the second with its inclosure.

I do myself the honor of transmitting you an account of the engagement between the French and British fleets on the twenty-seventh of July, as published by the British admiralty-board. — I received a printed copy of it last night from New-York, which I have forwarded to his excellency count D'Estaing. It is evident from admiral Keppel's own relation of the affair, that he was pretty severely handled; notwithstanding he affects in the conclusion to mention that he wished extremely for an opportunity to renew the combat the next day.

We are still in great suspense as to the operations and designs of the enemy, though every practicable measure has been used and is pursuing to come at them. By late and direct accounts it would seem that some troops at least are going from New-York. A few days, I think, must open their conduct decisively.

I have had the misfortune to hear that the Raleigh frigate has become a prize to two British ships of war after a long and very gallant resistance. Captain Barry, finding that the frigate would fall into the enemy's hands, ran her ashore on Seal-Island, to which he escaped in boats with about eighty of his hands, and from thence to the main. It is said he took measures for blowing her up, but was defeated in his purpose by the perfidy of an under officer who concealed himself and remained on board.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, Fredericksburg, October 18, 1778.

I AM honored with yours of the ninth, inclosing the resolves to extend the embargo, and to prevent forestalling provisions. I hope the latter will have the desired effect; for, un-

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less that most infamous practice of raising the prices of the necessities of life can be stopped, it will be impossible for any funds to subsist the army.

Inclosed you have the copy of a petition from the refugees in New-York to the commissioners. You may depend upon the authenticity of it, as it is taken from a New-York paper. It should seem by this that they are extremely solicitous and anxious to know whether New-York is to be garrisoned, which implies a suspicion on their part that it to be evacuated.—All accounts, since mine of the fourteenth, confirm the report of a very considerable embarkation. It is said to consist of ten British regiments completed to their full establishment, and their grenadier and light companies added to them. This will make them amount to upwards of five thousand men.—They have not failed.

I cannot say that I am satisfied that a total evacuation of the city is intended this winter, although many inhabitants near the lines, and several out of the city, are of that opinion.—I have set every engine at work to procure full intelligence of their designs; and I hope to succeed. The current opinion of deserters and others is that the present embarkation is intended for the West-Indies; some few have said that they have a design upon Charleston.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, Fredericksburg, Oct. 24, 1778.

THE letter which I had the honor of addressing to you the day before yesterday would inform Congress of the embarkation and sailing of a considerable detachment of the enemy from New-York, and of the measures I had taken in expectation of and upon the happening of the event.—Whether this will be succeeded by a further embarkation, or by a total evacuation of the posts which they hold within the states, in the course of this year or the ensuing one, I cannot pretend to determine. But, as it will be right and prudent in us to provide for every contingency, I would with the greatest deference submit it to Congress whether it may not be proper for them to call upon the states to provide men in time for filling their respective battalions, before or at any rate against the opening of the spring, and in the same manner as if there was a moral certainty that the war would be prosecuted with all possible vigor on the part of Britain. Should this not be the case, or should any

any events cast up in the mean time to render troops unnecessary, it will be easy to disband the levies and to keep them from the field,—while, on the other hand, our relaxation in not providing them may subject us at least to many disagreeable consequences.

The general return of the infantry in the month of September, transmitted to the board of war by the adjutant-general, and to which I beg leave to refer, will shew Congress the whole amount of our reputed force at that time. But I am to observe, that large, very large deductions are to be made from it on account of the columns of sick, and the men said to be on command. Many under the former description, particularly that of sick absent, are actually dead; others unfit for service; and several, who have recovered, have deserted: nor will the latter afford more than one half of its number in time of action, as various duties, such as waggoning, distant guards, escorts, &c. employ a great proportion of those under this denomination.

Besides the above deductions, Congress will perceive from the return which I now take the liberty of transmitting, that there are four thousand three hundred and eighty draughts and others, whose terms of service will expire during and by the close of winter: for I am sorry to add that our exertions to re-engage the draughts and old soldiers in this predicament, for the usual bounty, have proved so far ineffectual and without success. I have not tried what effect the additional grant of ten dollars might have: but I fear, and it seems to be the opinion of all I have consulted upon the occasion, that it would have but little if any influence. I know, in the case of the draughts and troops of one state, that the offer of twenty dollars on the part of the continent, with a like allowance and an actual deposit of it by the state, has been no temptation.

The general reluctance and refusal is founded in the unhappy depreciated light in which the soldiery view the money, and their expectation of receiving immense state, district, and substitute bounties. Whether grants or bounties by Congress, bearing some proportion to these, to such as should enlist for the war, would be attended with better success, I cannot undertake to decide. The experiment may be made if they judge it proper: and if it proves an inducement of any extent, it will be an infinite saving in the end. I believe however our surest and only certain aids will be derived from draughting, which I trust may and will be done by the states on the recommendation of Congress, agreeable to the mode mentioned in my letter to their committee when they first honored me with

a visit

a visit at Valley-Forge. The exertions to recruit by voluntary enlistments may still go on, as both modes in all probability will not produce near as many men as may be found necessary. In the case of the Carolina troops whose service is ending every day, the officers say that nothing will induce them to enlist, unless they can be permitted to go home on furlough till the spring. On this indulgence they seem to think several might be engaged.—The distance is great, and there will be some uncertainty as to their returning: besides, it will be fixing a precedent for others.—If Congress approve the plan, they will be pleased to inform me by the earliest opportunity.

I am under some difficulty about clothing the draughts, and the old soldiers whose service is expiring and will determine every day. As Congress have never expressed their sense upon the subject, and this is increased by a letter which I received some time ago from the board of war, which respects particularly the draughts, I must earnestly request that Congress will favor me with the speediest direction in the case, whether they are to be furnished out of the supplies coming on, equally with the other troops. At the same time I will take the liberty to offer it as my opinion, that, however inconvenient or expensive it may appear at the first view to clothe them, the measure will be necessary, and founded not only in humanity but sound policy. We have no prospect now of levying men in any other way: and if they are not clothed, they will be exhausted by sickness and death; and not doing it may prove an insurmountable bar or at least a great obstacle to our obtaining future aids, though the exigencies of our affairs should be never so pressing. Yet the clothes may be withheld as long as circumstances will permit, as an inducement for them to enlist. In the instance of the old soldiers who have not received the annual allowance of Congress, the point seems clearly in their favor.—The board suggested that the draughts might be supplied out of the best of the old clothes which might be given in by the troops on receiving new ones:—but unfortunately there will be few of any worth.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR, *Head-Quarters, Fredericksburg, October 26, 1778.*

I HAD the honor of your letter of the twenty-second instant, with its several inclosures, to-day at noon.—I shall pay a proper regard to the act of Congress respecting monsieur De Vrigney.

Vinney.—For information on the second resolve for obtaining a return of the re-enlistments, I must beg leave to refer Congress to my letter of the twenty-fourth.—I have complied with the intention of the third, and transmitted the act to Sir Henry Clinton, which relates to Mr. Franks.

The certain intelligence of a large number of troops having embarked at New-York,—the sailing of a considerable fleet concurring at the moment their departure was expected,—left me no room to doubt that the fleet which went out of the Hook on the nineteenth and early the twentieth instant contained the embarkation of which I had been advised. In the persuasion of this, my letter of the twenty-second to your excellency was written: but, from more recent advices, and through various channels, bearing every mark of authenticity, I am to conclude the supposition has been ill founded.—The above-mentioned fleet appears to have carried away no other troops than invalids, the officers of the corps lately reduced, with some refugees.—The twenty-third instant the troops which had embarked still remained in the harbor. They are fixed at ten or twelve British regiments, and six of the new levies.—This fleet was probably composed of homeward-bound victuallers, with some merchantmen and other vessels which chose to take the protection of a convoy. The accounts still say that they were accompanied by fourteen or fifteen sail of the line and some frigates.

October 27.—In my letter of the twenty-second I advised your excellency of the measures I had taken to ascertain the practicability of an enterprise against Chemung.—I have the honor to inclose the report of governor Clinton, general Schuyler, and general Hand, on the subject.—I cannot help concurring with these gentlemen in opinion, and am persuaded from a number of considerations that we must lay aside all thoughts of an expedition against that place for the present. Besides other necessary preparations, we have not yet been able to get forward the clothing for the army.—The Congress will also perceive in lieutenant-colonel Butler's journal, transmitted to your excellency in my letter of the twenty-second instant, the great difficulties he had to encounter in crossing the rivers at a much earlier season of the year.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

Sir, Head-Quarters, near Fredericksburg, Oct. 31, 1778.

YOUR excellency's favor of the twenty-third instant was delivered me yesterday, with the resolution respecting monsieur L'Ecluse. As soon as I am notified of the place of his residence, I will give the necessary directions for carrying into execution the humane and benevolent intention of Congress towards him.

I take the liberty to inclose a letter from doctor Conolly respecting his situation. His case, I am persuaded, will have due attention, and such a determination as humanity and policy will justify.

By intelligence received yesterday evening, it is said that transports with ten regiments on board had fallen down from York to the watering-place; that there were several other ships laden (not said with what); and that there were others at the wharfs taking in troops. I cannot tell whether this intelligence is certain: for we have been deceived of late in points of information that seemed to carry equal marks of authenticity.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

P. S. Just as I was closing my letter I received one from lord Stirling, dated yesterday at nine o'clock A. M. by which he informs me that on wednesday and thursday about eighty sail of ships, chiefly transports with troops, fell down from New-York to Staten-Island, and that sixty or seventy sail lay there before.

Sir,

Head-Quarters, November 6, 1778.

ON wednesday evening I received your excellency's favors of the thirtieth ultimo and first instant, with their several inclosures.—I will direct the best and cheapest disposition I can to be made of the cavalry for their accommodation in quarters, and will instruct the forage-master on the occasion.—The remittance to the paymaster, which you mention, I presume has come to hand, having been applied to by him to issue an order for the payment of the troops for August and September.—I have transmitted the letter from Nicholas Dupui and others, with the affidavits, to his excellency governor Clinton, and have ordered colonel Cortland to march with his regiment towards the Minisinks, and to take such posts as the governor may point out.—I have made a distribution of the printed manifestoes; and there is no doubt but the enemy will very soon be possessed of some of the copies, and of newspapers that contain them.

By a letter from lord Stirling, of the third instant, he informed

ed me that the fleet at the Hook the preceding day increased to a hundred and eighty sail; and, that morning at seven, weighed anchor and stood out to sea.—I am impatiently waiting for further advices from New-York, and to learn whether any other and what movements are likely to take place.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR, *Head-Quarters, Fredericksburg, Nov. 11, 1778.*

I HAVE been honored with yours of the nineteenth, twenty-seventh, twenty-eighth, and twenty-ninth, ultimo.

A tolerable supply of shoes has lately arrived to the issuing clothier's store from the eastward, Pennsylvania, and Jersey: and, if the different persons employed in procuring that article will exert themselves to keep up the supply, I hope we shall not be much distressed during the winter, provided we remain quietly in quarters.

It is much to be wished that Congress would come to a speedy resolution concerning the procuring clothing for the officers at a price in proportion to their pay, more especially, as they were led to expect this from a resolve which passed in November 1777.—If the clothing itself cannot be conveniently procured, I imagine the alternative of allowing an adequate sum of money in lieu thereof would be the next best expedient.

As the board must undoubtedly have experienced the many difficulties arising from the want of a proper arrangement of the clothier's department, I hope they will press the committee who have that business in charge, to bring in their report, that the new system may be carried into execution without loss of time.—Whether it has been owing to want of conduct in the late officer, or his want of proper powers and directions, I will not undertake to determine: but the irregularity in that department has been an endless source of trouble to me, and a great cause of discontent in the army.

I have given the issuing clothier directions to keep an account of the marks and numbers of the bales of blankets, and of the quality of their contents, from whence you will be able to trace from whom those small ones were purchased. When the issues are completed, you shall have the account.—The directions to Mr. Mease were very proper.—If any corps want completing in any particular article which is not to be procured here, I will sign the order myself.

In the present scarcity of hats, the caps of which you have forwarded

forwarded a pattern must be used by way of substitute. But an officer very attentive to the health of his men informs me that he found an inconvenience from the use of woollen caps last winter instead of hats: when the men put them off in the spring, they many of them took violent colds from the sudden transition. They also contribute to keep the head dirty,—than which nothing is more unhealthy.

I find it impracticable to carry the recommendation of the board, respecting calling in the old clothes upon delivery of the new, into execution. The soldiers were not to be convinced of the good policy and economy intended by the application of the old clothes to hospitals and the followers of the army, but looked upon it as an unjustifiable attempt to deprive them of what they had earned by their year's service, and what (considering the scanty supply of some kinds of covering, blankets in particular) would help to make them more comfortable during the winter. These discontents were communicated to me, the moment they arose, by some of the best officers in the line; which determined me to let the matter drop, more especially as another argument was made use of, which was unanswerable: this was, that, upon a fair settlement, there would be found a considerable deficiency of the bounty-clothing for a year or two past, and that therefore it would be more equitable to make up the deficiency than to draw in the remains.

I have the honor to be, &c. G. W.

Sir,

Head-Quarters, November 11, 1778.

ON wednesday afternoon I received a letter from the honorable Mr. Lee and Mr. Lovell of the committee for foreign affairs, inclosing a plan and sundry resolutions of Congress for attacking Canada the next campaign in conjunction with the forces of his most christian majesty,—and requesting my observations upon the same to be transmitted to Congress, and a copy to be delivered to the marquis De la Fayette. These dispatches, through the indisposition of the marquis (who unfortunately was seized with a fever in his journey from Philadelphia, which still detains him at Fishkill), were prevented coming to hand till that time: and the great importance and extent of the subject they comprehend would not permit me the honor of an earlier communication of my sentiments.—I hope Congress will excuse my not complying with that part of the resolution which requires me to deliver a copy of my observations

servations to the marquis, as the manner in which I am obliged to treat the subject opens such a prospect of our wants and our weaknesses; as, in point of policy, ought only to be known to ourselves.

I am always happy to concur in sentiment with Congress; and I view the emancipation of Canada as an object very interesting to the future prosperity and tranquility of these states; but I am sorry to say the plan proposed for the purpose does not appear to me to be eligible under our present circumstances.—I consider it as my duty, and what Congress expects from me, to give my reasons for this opinion with that frankness and candor which the importance of the subject demands; and, in doing this, I am persuaded I shall not fail to meet with their approbation.

It seems to me impolitic to enter into engagements with the court of France for carrying on a combined operation of any kind without a moral certainty of being able to fulfil our parts, particularly if the first proposal came from us. If we should not be able to perform them, it would argue either a want of consideration, a defective knowledge of our resources, or something worse than either, which could not fail to produce a degree of distrust and discontent that might be very injurious to the Union. In the present instance, should the scheme proposed be adopted, a failure on our part would certainly occasion in them a misapplication of a considerable land and naval force which might be usefully employed elsewhere, and probably their total loss.—It is true, if we were at this time to enter into the engagement, we should be every day better able to judge whether it will be in our power to accomplish what may be expected from us: and, if we should find hereafter that our resources will be unequal to the undertaking, we may give notice to the court of France in season to prevent the sailing of the troops and the ill effects that might attend it. But besides that a project of this kind could not be embraced by France without its having an influence on the whole system of operations for the next campaign, which of course would receive some dérangement from its being abandoned,—a renunciation of this could not fail to give a very unfavorable impression of our foresight and providence, and would serve to weaken the confidence of that court in our public councils.

So far from there being a moral certainty of our complying with our engagements, it may in my opinion be very safely pronounced, that, if the enemy keep possession of their present posts at New-York and Rhode-Island, it will be impracticable either

to furnish the men or the other necessary supplies for prosecuting the plan. They will not attempt to keep those posts with less than ten thousand men and a considerable navy.—If it should be thought best for the advantage of carrying on the expeditions intended, to forego any offensive operations against these garrisons, and to leave them in quiet possession of such important places, we shall at least be obliged to provide for the security of the country against their incursions and depredations, by keeping up a force sufficient to confine them within their own limits. It is natural too to suppose that the people's expectations of being protected will grow stronger in proportion to the diminution of the enemy's force, and the greater facility with which it can be afforded. They will hardly be content to continue in a state of alarm and insecurity from a force so inconsiderable, while the principal strength of the states is drawn out in the prosecution of remote objects.—If this reasoning is just, we shall be obliged to have a larger force than the enemy, posted in different places to prevent sudden inroads which they would otherwise be able to make at different points : and the number required cannot be estimated at less than twelve or fifteen thousand men. This will be two thirds as large a force as we have been able to raise and maintain during the progress of the war, as these calculations both of the enemy's strength and of our own are meant to designate the number of effective rank and file.

If I rightly understand the plan in consideration, it requires for its execution twelve thousand six hundred men rank and file. Besides these,—to open passages through a wilderness for the march of the several bodies of troops,—to provide the means of long and difficult transportations by land and water,—to establish posts of communication for the security of our convoys,—to build and man vessels of force necessary for acquiring a superiority on the lakes ;—these and many other purposes peculiar to these enterprises, which would be tedious in detail,—will demand a much larger proportion of artificers and persons to be employed in manual and laborious offices, than are usual in the ordinary course of military operations. When we add the whole together, the aggregate number of men requisite for the service of the ensuing campaign will be little less than double the number heretofore in the field : but to be more certain in the calculation, it may be placed at only one half more.

Experience is the only rule to judge by in the present case.—Every expedient has been exhausted in the preceding campaigns to raise men ; and it was found impossible to get together a greater force than we had, though the safety and success
of

of the cause seemed absolutely to require it. The natural and direct inference therefore is, that the resources of the country were inadequate to a larger supply. I cannot then see that we can hope upon any principle to be equal to so much greater exertions next year, when the people and the army appear to grow daily more tired of the war, and the depreciation of our money continually increasing, and of consequence proving a smaller temptation to induce them to engage.

The state of our supplies for transporting and subsisting the troops will stand upon a footing equally bad. We have encountered extreme difficulties in these respects, and have found that it was full as much as we were competent to, to feed the army we have already had, and enable it to keep the field and perform the movements required by the contingencies of the service. It is not likely that these difficulties will diminish; but on the contrary they will rather multiply as the value of our currency lessens: and the enormous prices to which provisions have risen, and the artificial scarcity created by monopolies, with what we have to fear from the effect of the same spirit, give us no reason to flatter ourselves that our future prospects can be much better.

In this situation of things we are hardly warranted to expect that we shall have it in our power to satisfy the demands of numbers so much greater than we have yet had to supply, especially if we consider that the scene of our operations has hitherto been in the heart of the country furnishing our resources, which of course facilitated the drawing them out,—and that we shall then be carrying on the war at an immense distance, in a country wild and uncultivated, incapable of affording any aid, and great part of it hostile. We cannot in this case depend on temporary or occasional supplies, as we have been accustomed, but must have ample magazines laid up beforehand. The labor and expense in forming these, and transporting the necessary stores of every kind for the use of the troops, will be increased to a degree that can be more easily conceived than described. The transportation must be, a great part of the way, through deserts affording no other forage than herbage; and, from this circumstance, our principal subsistence of the flesh kind must be salted, which would not only be an additional expense in the additional consumption of so scarce and dear an article as salt, but would greatly increase the difficulty both of providing and transporting. My letter of the twenty-ninth ultimo (transmitting a copy of one from the quarter-master-general) which I had the honor of addressing to Congress, and to which I wish to refer, will point
out

out the difficulties and daily expense attending our supplies of the article of flour only, in our present circumstances, exclusive of its cost, and lay the foundation for a sort of comparative estimate to be formed of those that would attend the support of troops when employed at so great a distance.

If, in addition to all this, we should have the French fleet to supply during the winter,—the likelihood of which I have no sufficient information to ground a judgment upon,—it will appear still more impracticable to furnish the supplies requisite for the extensive operations proposed. But, independent of this, the improbability of doing it is, in my apprehension, infinitely too great to justify the undertaking.

This reasoning is founded on the supposition that the enemy do not evacuate their present posts at New-York and Rhode-Island: nor can we presume upon any past appearances so far as to determine the contrary, and enter into a national contract, the fulfilment of which at any rate, in my judgment, will depend on this event. Opinions on the subject are various, and the arguments on both sides cogent. Circumstances have hitherto been very indecisive:—at Rhode-Island there is nothing that looks like an evacuation, that I have heard of.—at New-York, the length of time that has elapsed since the event has been expected, which cannot be satisfactorily accounted for, is not a little doubtful and problematical.

But if it were even certain that the enemy would shortly leave these states, I should think our ability to carry on the expeditions meditated (from the nature of the country, and the remoteness from the source of our supplies, joined to the discouraging situation of our finances) too precarious to authorise a preconcerted agreement with a foreign power, binding ourselves to the attempt. On the other hand, if we were certain of doing our part, a co-operation by the French would, in my opinion, be as delicate and precarious an enterprise as can be imagined. All the reasons, which induce France and the United States to wish to wrest Canada and Halifax from the dominion of England, operate with her perhaps more forcibly to use every possible effort for their defence. The loss of them would be a deadly blow to her trade and empire. To hope to find them in a defenceless state, must be founded in a supposition of the total incapacity of Britain both by land and sea to afford them protection.—I should apprehend we may run into a dangerous error by estimating her power so low.

We have been informed that a strong garrison has been lately sent to Halifax, amounting, by report, to about four thousand

men:

men :—a part of the detachments which the enemy are now making from New-York are currently said to be, and in all probability are, destined for that place :—if they evacuate entirely, a very considerable part of their force will no doubt go there ; —and in any case we may expect that reinforcements will be thrown from thence into Canada early in the spring. The English are now greatly superior to the French by sea in America, and will from every appearance continue so unless Spain interpose,—an event which I do not know we are authorised to count upon. However, as I am destitute of information with respect to the present state of European politics, this is a point upon which I can form but an imperfect judgment : but if it should not take place, I think it infinitely probable, from the maritime situation and advantages of Halifax, which is represented as the finest port and best naval arsenal in America,—from the security it is calculated to give to the general trade and possessions of Britain, both on the continent and in the West-Indies,—that it will be a station for a larger naval force than the one intended to to convoy the French troops :—it will naturally be the principal rendezvous of the British ships of war in America. If this position be admitted,—should the English have any knowledge or even suspicion of the design of the French court to send a fleet up the river Saint Laurence, nothing will be easier than to intercept this fleet on its way, or to take or destroy it after it has got in. Nor can we flatter ourselves with keeping this business a secret. Congress perhaps will be surprised to be told that it is already in more hands than they suspect : and, in the progress of the negotiation in France, it will get into many more. The preparations will announce the intention.—It is indeed a part of the plan to avow the destination of the French troops, though this is to be contradicted by the manner of their clothing, &c.—The stationing troops this winter, as is proposed, particularly on the Mohawk and Connecticut river, would be unequivocal proofs of the design : it must at least excite the strongest suspicion, so as to put the English nation upon their guard, and make them take precautions to counteract it.

But if the French troops should arrive before Quebec, I think their success against that strong place, fortified by every advantage of nature and of art, would be extremely doubtful.—It is supposed this capital post will be found in so weak a condition as to make its surrender a matter of course, owing to the enemy's having previously drained themselves for the defence of Detroit, Niagara, Saint John's, Montreal, &c. but we cannot

depend that this will be the case:—they may esteem it the part of prudence rather to sacrifice or at least to hazard the extremities in order to collect their strength at the heart. Montreal indeed, and the posts essential to it, must be defended, because the possession of them would throw too large a part of the country into our hands. But if reinforcements are sent to Canada early in the spring,—a circumstance extremely likely,—these may be attended to without too far weakening the garrison at Quebec; and, as before observed, we cannot build upon their conduct's being regulated by an ignorance of our plans. The French troops instead of a coup-de-main, would in this case be reduced to the necessity of carrying on a blockade.

I will now take the liberty to turn my attention towards the operations of our own troops. The one against Detroit I shall at present say nothing about: if well conducted, I should hope that place would fall without very great difficulty.—The case is very different with respect to Niagara. This, I am informed, is one of the strongest fortresses in America, and can only be reduced by regular approaches or by famine. In accomplishing this, last war, and a conquest as far as Montreal, I believe general Amherst exhausted two campaigns, with all the advantages which he derived from the united efforts of Britain and America, with every convenience for water-transportation, including plenty of seamen, and with money that commanded every thing which either country could furnish. The former mode would require great perseverance, time, and labor, and an apparatus which it would be almost impracticable to transport. The latter is practicable, but very difficult. To effect it, we must gain a superiority on the lakes. The enemy have already a respectable force there:—if they suspect our design, which they cannot fail to do from the measures to be taken, they may improve the interval in adding to it; and, by providing materials and artificers upon the spot, they may be able to increase it so as to keep pace with us. It is therefore easy to see that we ought not to be too sanguine in the success of this expedition, and that, if a moderate force be employed in the defence of Niagara without degarnishing Quebec and the intermediate posts, its reduction will be a very arduous task.

The body of troops to penetrate by way of the river Saint Francis must meet with great obstacles: they will have a march of about a hundred and fifty miles from Cohos, which is about a hundred and sixty miles beyond Hartford, a great part of which is through a hitherto-uninhabited and trackless country, with an immense train of waggons: all the stores and provisions

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for the whole march, and the future supply of the troops, at least till they should get footing in Canada, must accompany them from the beginning. The impediments and delays in such a march almost exceed conception.

When arrived at the Saint Laurence, fresh obstacles probably would present themselves. The presumption is, that if the enemy could not make head there, they would desolate the country through which they were to pass, destroy all the provision and forage, remove every kind of water craft, and demolish the materials for building others. These precautions being taken on the Sorelle and Saint Laurence would pretty effectually obstruct our progress both to Montreal and Cadoroqui,—to say nothing of the rapidity of the current and the numerous rifts between Montreal and Lagalette.

When we deliberately consider all the obstacles in the execution, and the difficulties we shall find in preparing the vast magazines required, which have been already enumerated, if within the compass of our resources, we shall be led to think it not very improbable that this body may be unable to penetrate Canada, at least in time to co-operate with the French troops, if a co-operation should be necessary. The situation of these troops then would be delicate and dangerous:—exposed to a defeat from the united force of the enemy, in great danger of having their retreat cut off by a superior naval force in the river, they would have every thing to fear. On the other hand, if our operations should be as successful as we may flatter ourselves, a tempest or a British fleet may deprive us of our expected aid, and at a critical moment we may find ourselves in the bosom of an enemy's country, obliged to combat their whole force with one inferior and reduced by a tedious and wasting march. The five thousand men, when they arrived in Canada, would probably little exceed four capable of service; and would be still less, if out of them we should establish posts as we advanced, to insure a retreat and protect escorts of provision which must follow for future support. Thus an accident in either case would involve the defeat of the whole project; and the catastrophe might be attended with the most unhappy consequences to America.

The plan proposed appears to me not only too extensive and beyond our abilities, but too complex. To succeed, it requires such a fortunate coincidence of circumstances as could hardly be hoped, and cannot be relied on;—the departure of the enemy from these states, without which we cannot furnish the stipulated force, or supplies to maintain them,—such a want of power or want of foresight in the enemy as will oblige them to neglect

glect the reinforcement of Halifax and of Canada; and prevent them, however conveniently situated, from the disputing the passage of the four ships of the line and four frigates up the river Saint Laurence, or attempting their destruction afterwards;—such a combination of favourable incidents as will enable several bodies acting separately and independently by sea and land, and from different countries, to conform to times and periods so as to ensure a co-operation;—these and many other circumstances must conspire, to give success to the enterprise.

Congress, I am persuaded, had powerful reasons for fixing the convoy at the number they have: and their superior information respecting the affairs of Europe at this present juncture enables them to judge much better than I can pretend to do, of its sufficiency. But from the imperfect view I have of the matter, I have been led, in considering the subject, to look upon it as insufficient. From the general tenor of intelligence, the English out-number the French in the channel: in America, both on the continent and in the islands, they are greatly superior. If the last Toulon fleet is employed in the Mediterranean, the French may have the superiority there: but, upon the whole, the balance of naval force seems hitherto to be on the side of the English. If we add to this that the number of ships of war in the French ports, built or building, bears no comparison to the number in the English ports,—and that Britain notwithstanding the diminution she has suffered, is still a kingdom of great maritime resources,—we shall be disposed to conclude that the preponderance is too likely to continue where it is. The interposition of Spain indeed would make a very interesting change: but her backwardness heretofore seems to be an argument that she is withheld from interfering by some weighty political motives: and how long these may continue to restrain her, is a question I am unqualified to determine.

Besides these general objections to the plan which have been stated, there appear to me to be some particular ones which I shall take the liberty to point out.

In the first place I observe there are to be five thousand militia employed in the two expeditions against Detroit and Niagara.—The drawing into service so large a number composed chiefly of husbandmen, in addition to what may be found necessary for other exigencies on the coast at so interesting a season of the year, will certainly be very injurious to the culture of our lands, and must tend to add to the deficiency of supplies. But this, though not to be overlooked, is not the principal objection.—In the expedition against Detroit, militia perhaps may
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answer, as it is not a post of very great strength, and may possibly be abandoned on or in a little time after the approach of a force that cannot be opposed in the field, and the garrison proceed to reinforce that of Niagara. But even here troops of another kind would be far preferable. However, the case will be very different with respect to this last:—it is, as I have before mentioned, one of the strongest fortresses of America, and demands for its reduction the very best of troops. Militia have neither patience nor perseverance for a siege. This has been demonstrated by all the experience we have had. An attempt to carry on one which should materially depend on them would be liable to be frustrated by their inconstancy in the most critical moments.—Agreeable to the plan under consideration, three thousand five hundred out of five thousand six hundred are to be militia.

It is a part of the plan that the troops sent against Detroit, whether successful or not, are to form a junction with those at Niagara. It appears to me on the contrary, that the expedition against Detroit, under the present arrangement, must stand on its own bottom, and have no other object than the reducing that place and destroying the adjacent Indian settlements. Lake Erie is certainly occupied by two armed vessels of sixteen and eighteen guns, and, it is said, by five or six others of smaller size, having two, three, or four guns each, which, while the enemy hold Niagara, will prevent the communication of our troops by way of the lake,—to say nothing for want of batteaux for transportation. A communication by land must be performed through an extent of more than four hundred miles, and a great part of this at least under many disadvantages of route, and through tribes of hostile Indians.

My knowledge of the country is not sufficiently accurate to enable me to discover the reasons which determined Congress to divide the force destined against Niagara, and to appoint the march of one body from Ononguaga to that place. It seems to me however that this disposition might be subject to one great inconvenience, which is, that, if each column be not superior to the whole collective force of the enemy, they risk being beaten separately and successively, besides the trouble and expense of preparing as it were for two expeditions instead of one,—of opening two roads instead of one,—and the uncertainty of a co-operation (if no disaster should happen to either) at the moment when it might be necessary. The inquiries I have as yet had it in my power to make are opposed to the practicability of conveying cannon in the route from Ononguaga to Niagara, or

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at least place it as a point infinitely doubtful: and, without cannon, nothing can be effected against that post. Upon the whole, the great matter essential to success against Niagara is to subdue the enemy's force on lakes Erie and Ontario, particularly the latter. This once done, and the garrison by that means cut off from its supplies, the fort will be likely to fall an easy prey. Here our efforts should be directed: nor do I at present perceive the purposes to be answered by the body going from Ononguaga, unless the devastation of the intermediate Indian villages be the object,—which perhaps may not be equal to the risk, labor, and expense, and the more so as they would fall of course if we should succeed in the general operation.

The cantoning five thousand troops this winter on Connecticut-river, under our present prospects, will, in my opinion be impracticable, and, in any case, unadvisable.—When I had the honor of writing to Congress in September last on the subject of a winter campaign into Canada, I had been led by [colonel] Bailey, and other gentlemen acquainted with the country, to expect that very considerable magazines of provisions might be laid up on the upper parts of that river. But it appears on experiment that their zeal for the expedition made them too sanguine in the matter. The purchases fall far short of what was expected. The difficulties of transportation, as represented by the quarter-masters and commissaries, supported by facts that speak for themselves, are so great and so complicated that I should have no hope of being able, from remote parts of the continent, to throw in the quantity requisite for subsisting these troops during the winter, and at the same time of forming the magazines which would be necessary to prosecute the expedition in spring. We may be endeavouring to form the magazines: but the troops cannot be on the spot this winter; otherwise they will exhaust the provision as fast as it can be collected.—The same objection applies to the stationing troops on the Mohawk-river.

In estimating our force for the next campaign, it is to be considered that upwards of four thousand of the present army will have completed their terms of service by the last of May next, and that a great proportion of the remainder will have done the same about the close of the ensuing fall, unless they can be induced to re-engage,—of which the ill success of our present exertions to enlist those whose engagements are about to expire afford but an unfavorable prospect. This and the general temper of the officers, dissatisfied much with their situation,

tion; will suggest a strong argument against the extensive projects in contemplation.

In whatever point of light the subject is placed, our ability to perform our part of the contract appears to me infinitely too doubtful and precarious to justify the undertaking. A failure, as I have already observed, would involve consequences too delicate and disagreeable to be hazarded. But, at the same time that my judgment is against this, I am clearly of opinion that we should attempt every thing that our circumstances will permit: but, as the extent of our power must be regulated by many possible events, I would wish to hold ourselves free to act according to either possibility, and as a clearer view of our future resources may authorise.—If the enemy entirely leave these states, it will produce a vast change in our affairs; and new prospects may open, of which we can at present have but a very imperfect idea. It would be a great step towards raising the value of our money, which would give a new spring to our military operations.—We may be able to undertake much more than we can now foresee.

If the enemy attempt to keep posts in these states, a primary object will be to expel them if in our power:—if not we must make proper provision to bar their depredations, and must turn our attention to the security of our frontiers, by pursuing such measures as shall be within the reach of our abilities.—Though we may not be able to launch into so wide a field as we could wish, something upon a more particular scale may be enterprised. Detroit and Niagara may perhaps be reduced, though Canada may not be an accession to the confederacy.—With a view to what is possible, preparations may be going on, and we can make such an application of them as we shall find practicable.

As there is no time to be lost in doing this, I shall give the necessary orders so far as relates to the article of provision, which indeed has been already done in part. Magazines of forage, materials for boat and ship building, and other articles, must also be provided,—which will depend on the final arrangements and more definitive instructions of Congress. These measures will be necessary to be taken whether the present plan is carried on, or whether something less extensive, depending wholly on ourselves, is substituted in its place.—I shall wait the further orders of Congress for the government of my conduct in delivering the plan to the marquis as their resolution seems to require, or in transmitting it immediately to doctor Franklin as the letter from the committee seems to direct. At present

present I am under some doubt concerning the intention of Congress in this particular.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

P. S. I shall use every means in my power to obtain intelligence in the points mentioned in the resolution of the twenty-sixth ultimo, and had taken measures for the purpose with respect to Canada before.—Mr. Livingston, an officer in the corps of guards, will have the honor of presenting these dispatches to your excellency. Their importance requiring more than a common messenger, he very obligingly undertook, upon application, to give them a safe conveyance.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, Fredericksburg, Nov. 12, 1778.

INCLOSED I have the honor to transmit the copy of a letter from brigadier-general Hamilton to general Heath. I did not chuse to grant the request without the concurrence of Congress, though at the same time I think it may be safely done. It will save the trouble and expense of another escort at a future day.—I shall be glad of the determination of Congress as speedily as possible, as the flag vessel, bound to Virginia with the baggage of the convention troops, will perhaps be detained for the answer.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, Fredericksburg, Nov. 13, 1778.

BARON De Steuben will have the honor of delivering you this. He waits upon Congress on the subject of the inspectorship, which he is extremely anxious should be put upon some decided footing. He appears to be sensible of some difficulties in the plan formerly proposed, and which I had the honor some time since to transmit my observations upon,—and desirous that they should not prove an obstruction to the progress of an institution, which, if accommodated to the circumstances and sentiments of the army, promises very great advantages to the service. The success the baron had in the beginning, and the benefits derived from it, make me regret the obstacles that have so long suspended his exertions; and I should wish he may have it in his power to resume them on principles most advancive of the service. On these I have already fully com-

communicated my ideas, and it is unnecessary I should add.
I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, Fredericksburg, Nov. 14, 1778.

I DO myself the honor to transmit you the copy of a letter of the tenth instant, which I received yesterday from sir Henry Clinton, on the subject of exchanging the prisoners of the convention.—Should the proposition be agreeable to Congress, I shall be glad to receive powers to enter into a negotiation as soon as possible, as it may probably relieve our officers upon parole from the disagreeable necessity of returning to New-York. I will just observe, that, should an exchange take place upon the terms proposed by sir Henry, I should suppose we shall not be obliged to give up any considerable number of privates by way of composition, as the officers of the convention (should the whole be suffered to be exchanged) would go a great way towards liberating ours at present in the hands of the enemy. But it cannot be expected that they will leave their troops entirely destitute of officers.—Mr. commissary Clark, mentioned by sir Henry Clinton, was permitted by general Heath to go from Boston to New-York to settle the accounts and procure money for the discharge of the debts of the troops at Cambridge.—I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, Fredericksburg, Nov. 16, 1778.

I HAD the honor of receiving your favor of the sixth yesterday, with the inclosed copy of a letter from the president of the council of New-Jersey, relative to an expected attack upon the western frontier of that state.—I have just received a letter from general Hand giving intelligence of an attack upon colonel Alden's regiment at Cherry-Valley, effected by surprise, in consequence of which, there is too much reason to apprehend that regiment may fall a sacrifice. I transmit a copy of the dispatches announcing this disagreeable affair.

These depredations of the enemy give me the most serious concern. I lament that we have not yet had it in our power to give them an effectual check. I am perfectly convinced that the only certain way of preventing Indian ravages is to carry the war vigorously into their own country. But as this is thought impracticable at this late season of the year from the state of the water, and other impediments, I fear we must con-

tent ourselves with defensive precautions for the present.—I have already informed Congress that colonel Cortlandt's regiment had marched towards the Minisinks: but, having since directed count Pulaski to proceed with his corps to Colesfort in that neighborhood, colonel Cortlandt will take post somewhere between that place and Rochester. Orders are now given to colonel Spencer's regiment and colonel Armand's corps to join general Pulaski.—This disposition is agreeable to the opinion of governor Clinton and other gentlemen acquainted with the country whom I have consulted, and is calculated to cover the eastern frontier of Pennsylvania, New-Jersey, and the western part of New-York.—I shall also immediately send the remainder of general Clinton's brigade to Albany. When arrived there, if any thing offensive can possibly be undertaken, it shall be done: if not, they will be disposed of in a manner that shall seem best adapted for protection and defence.

With the greatest respect and esteem, I am, sir, your most obedient servant, G. W.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, Fredericksburg, Nov. 16, 1778.

BY the time this reaches you, general Du Portail will probably be at Philadelphia. One part of his business is to prosecute the directions given him some time since for forming a plan for the defence of the river Delaware, to be submitted to Congress: another part is to understand from Congress what may be their views and wishes with respect to his further continuance in America, and that of the three other gentlemen attached to him.

He informs me that the furlough he obtained from the court of France expires in February next, and that, unless there is a certain prospect of his being employed hereafter in a manner useful to the states and honorable to himself, he intends immediately to return. He therefore wishes some explicit ideas to be realised on the subject. He is also anxious that something definitive should be done with respect to the pay and the other appointments both of himself and the other gentlemen with him, which have been hitherto undecided, and have left them in an uncertain and disagreeable situation.—Added to this, he is desirous to have some arrangement fixed for the rules and manner of service in his department.

He delivered me, some days since, a memorial intended for Congress, and which I have now the honor to inclose, containing his ideas on a general system of fortification for these states, and which he requested me to accompany with my sentiments.

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But it includes questions of finance and considerations of policy the most extensive and important, of which Congress alone can form a competent judgment. I shall therefore only say, that, considered merely in a military point of view, the plan appears to me worthy of very serious attention.

It is but justice to general Du Portail to observe that I have a high opinion of his merit and abilities, and esteem him not only well acquainted with the particular branch he professes, but a man of sound judgment and real knowledge in military science in general. I have also a very favorable opinion of the other gentlemen. I will take the liberty to add that it appears to me that it will be extremely necessary and useful in our future operations, whether directed to offence or defence,—whether to dispossess the enemy of posts in our front, to assist in carrying on the proposed expedition into Canada, or any other on a less extensive plan which may be substituted in its stead for the mere security of our frontier.

Monsieur De Murnon has served in quality of engineer under general Du Portail since the first of March last, with the promise of a majority from the committee of arrangement at Valley-Forge. He has never yet received his commission. This, I presume, has been forgotten in a crowd of more important affairs.—With the greatest respect and esteem, I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR, *Head-Quarters, Fredericburg, Nov. 18, 1778.*

COUNT Kolhowski, who will have the honor of delivering you this, is a Polish officer who is desirous of entering into our service. I inclose your excellency two letters in his favor from doctor Franklin and Mr. Deane; added to which, he is recommended to me by count Pulaski as a brave and useful officer who served under him in Poland. He wishes him to be placed in his legion, with the rank of captain and the pay of lieutenant,—to perform the duties of the latter till he can give proofs of his talents and obtain some other employ.

With very great esteem and respect, I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR, *Head-Quarters, Fredericburg, Nov. 20, 1778.*

MR. Wheelock will have the honor of presenting this letter to your excellency. He waits on Congress upon the affairs of a regiment under the command of colonel Bedel, which, it seems, was raised in the Cohos county, or at least has been

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kept up since March last upon the recommendation of the marquis Fayette when at Albany. This corps, according to the inclosed state by Mr. Wheelock, who is the lieutenant colonel, to which I beg leave to refer Congress, and according to other information I have received, was at first assembled under the direction of major-general Gates about this time twelvemonth, for the purpose of a sudden enterprise against St. John's, and the enemy's armed vessels lying there, and was engaged till the last of March.

I cannot undertake to say in what manner or how usefully this regiment has been employed, or to what extent in point of men. But Mr. Wheelock says it has been of great service: and the object of his present journey is to obtain the direction of Congress for their being paid when proper rolls are produced, and their determination whether it is to be disbanded now, or continued till April next, the period for which the men are said to have engaged, though the marquis's recommendation extended only to the end of the present campaign.

The regiment may or may not be necessary in future. Much will depend on the system of conduct the enemy pursue the next campaign, and on our own operations. I would observe, under its present engagement, its services were to be local, or at least confined to a certain quarter. If it should be deemed expedient to re-enlist it, if practicable it should be done on the general scale of acting wherever it may be requisite (though perhaps it may not be possible to accomplish it): and, in such case, it will also be material for the public to have a more perfect knowledge of its arrangements than what I apprehend it has hitherto had.—I have the honor to be, &c. G. W.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, Fredericksburg, Nov. 21, 1778.

I HAD the honor of your excellency's two favors of the fourteenth and fifteenth instant, with their several inclosures.—The consideration of doctor Conolly's case, with the resolution of Congress, I have transmitted to sir Henry Clinton.

In my letter of the sixteenth I communicated to your excellency the attempt on Fort-Alden by the savages.—I have since received the inclosed dispatches confirming that disagreeable account.—I also informed Congress at the same time of the steps which were taken for the security of the frontier of Pennsylvania, New-Jersey, and the western part of New-York,—and that the two remaining regiments of general Clinton's brigade were ordered to Albany.

I have

I have to regret that the condition of affairs is such as does not admit of a compliance with repeated detachments from this army. However, that every thing possible might be done under our present circumstances, general Hand was further instructed on the sixteenth instant to confer with general Schuyler at Albany, and with those persons in that part of the country who could in any manner assist in forming his judgment on the best measures to be pursued with the troops which were employed in the several quarters: and yesterday I changed his command to that of the Minisinks, and forwarded him an extract from colonel Hartley's letter of the ninth, that he might accommodate his dispositions to recent events. I have only to add on this subject, that, on the twentieth, brigadier-general Clinton set out to take the command at Albany, with directions to consult with general Hand, and to form with him such combined arrangements as may appear most consistent with their united strength.—I am, sir, with great respect, &c. G. W.

P. S. As the troops of the convention are approaching the North-river, I am throwing over a part of the army in order to form a line of posts parallel to their march, for the greater security of the several passes leading to the river.

SIR, *Head-Quarters, Fredericburg, Nov. 23, 1778.*

JOHN Temple, esquire, will have the honor of presenting this to your excellency. I do not know what Mr. Temple's views are; but it seems he has some application to make to Congress. I never till now had the pleasure of a personal acquaintance with him: but, from the terms in which Mr. Bowdoin speaks of him, as your excellency will perceive by the inclosed letter,—and from other recommendations I have had of him, I consider him as a gentleman of sense and merit, and of warm attachment to the rights of his country, for which he appears to have suffered greatly in the present contest.

I have the honor to be, &c. G. W.

SIR, *Head-Quarters, Fredericburg, Nov. 23, 1778.*

YOUR excellency's letter of the eighteenth, with the inclosure referred to, came to hand yesterday.—I had before received the intelligence contained in Mr. Deane's letter, and in consequence made part of the detachments which have been mentioned in my late letters. It is highly probable that the

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kept up since March last upon the recommendation of the marquis Fayette when at Albany. This corps, according to the inclosed state by Mr. Wheelock, who is the lieutenant colonel, to which I beg leave to refer Congress, and according to other information I have received, was at first assembled under the direction of major-general Gates about this time twelvemonth, for the purpose of a sudden enterprise against St. John's, and the enemy's armed vessels lying there, and was engaged till the last of March.

I cannot undertake to say in what manner or how usefully this regiment has been employed, or to what extent in point of men. But Mr. Wheelock says it has been of great service: and the object of his present journey is to obtain the direction of Congress for their being paid when proper rolls are produced, and their determination whether it is to be disbanded now, or continued till April next, the period for which the men are said to have engaged, though the marquis's recommendation extended only to the end of the present campaign.

The regiment may or may not be necessary in future. Much will depend on the system of conduct the enemy pursue the next campaign, and on our own operations. I would observe, under its present engagement, its services were to be local, or at least confined to a certain quarter. If it should be deemed expedient to re-enlist it, if practicable it should be done on the general scale of acting wherever it may be requisite (though perhaps it may not be possible to accomplish it): and, in such case, it will also be material for the public to have a more perfect knowledge of its arrangements than what I apprehend it has hitherto had.—I have the honor to be, &c.

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late

late incursions and outrages were committed by the parties comprehended in Mr. Deane's intelligence; and I should hope that the force already gone from the army, together with the season, will prevent them at least from making further great depredations.

Since I had the honor of addressing your excellency on the twenty-first, I received a letter from general Hand, of the eighteenth, an extract from which you will find inclosed, with copies of a letter from major Whiting and one from a Mr. Clyde.—These will inform Congress, that, though the ravages at Cherry-Valley settlement were great in the late attack by the savages, yet our loss was much less than we had reason to apprehend it from our former advices. The account of the enemy's having stormed the fort, and cut off Alden's regiment, happily turns out premature. The inclosure, No. 2, which is a copy of a letter from lord Stirling of the seventeenth, will advise Congress that the fleet of transports, which had lain at the Hook for some days before, came up the preceding night to the watering-place, and also that some of the ships of war had returned to York dismasted.—Your excellency will also see by the inclosure, No. 3, (which contains an extract from a letter from general Sullivan, of the eighteenth instant) the latest advices I have respecting admiral Biron's fleet.—From the loss of the Somerset, and these several accounts, they suffered severely in their late cruise.

November 24.—I just received from general Hand the inclosed petition from major Whitcomb, addressed to Congress, and his letter to general Hand, of the same date. My information respecting the corps under major Whitcomb's command has hitherto been very imperfect; and even now I do not know the terms on which it was engaged: nor had I, till these letters came to hand, any reason to think that the troops above had not all been equally paid, having sent up a supply of money for the purpose soon after I came to this camp, and authorised the paymaster-general a few days ago to forward a further quantity.—I shall immediately write to general Clinton, now on his way to Albany, to send a proper officer to master the corps, and also three companies (which he calls provincials) under his direction, said to be engaged to the first of next month; after which, both will be paid on his presenting proper rolls.—With respect to clothing, the only application I recollect to have had from major Whitcomb was answered with such supplies, both in quantity and quality, as our stores would admit of. It may perhaps be practicable hereafter to put his corps on a better footing in this instance.

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The alarm which major Whitcomb speaks of in the beginning of his letter to general Hand was occasioned (as Congress will perceive by a copy of another letter from him to general Hand) by a descent made by a body of men in the country about the south end of lake Champlain, and who, according to his report, have done considerable damage.

I directed general Portail some time ago to take a view of the works carrying on in the Highlands for the defence of the North-river, and to make an estimate of the cannon necessary for the purpose. This he did: and, as he is now at Philadelphia, I have written to him by this conveyance, and requested him to present the estimate to Congress. I am sorry the number wanted is so great, and the more so as I find upon inquiry that the Salisbury furnace in Connecticut, which used to cast so many, is much out of repair, and could not possibly be put in order, and in a proper state for supplies, before May.—the providing of cannon is a matter of infinite importance; and I am persuaded Congress will take every means in their power to accomplish it. Besides the pressing and extensive demand for the works on the North-river, we cannot extend our views too soon to the obtaining further large supplies. We must in the course of things have occasion for a great deal of artillery: and, in any enterprise we may undertake against Canada, whether on a large or small scale, several peices of various calibers will be absolutely essential. Besides arming the ships and vessels we shall be obliged to build to gain the navigation of the lakes, our land operations will require a great number.

A detachment of continental troops will conduct those of the convention from the North-river to the Delaware. The German battalion is to compose part of the escort: and, after the convention troops cross to Pennsylvania, I have directed it, in consequence of the intelligence transmitted of late by Congress respecting the frontiers, to proceed to Easton with all its baggage, where it is to wait till general Hand arrives at the Minilinks, and whence it will be ready to act as circumstances may require. At the same time, if these frequent detachments from the army could be avoided, it were much to be wished. The troops will be by this means in a very dispersed state; and, besides losing perhaps some advantages which might present themselves if they were more collected, their discipline will be greatly injured, and it will be extremely difficult, from a variety of causes, to draw them together again: and, if it should be practicable, it is highly probable we shall find their number much impaired by desertion and otherwise.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

Head.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, November 26, 1778.

MR. John Dodge will have the honor of delivering this letter to your excellency. His history is that he is a native of Connecticut, and about eight years ago, as he informs me, settled in the country between Detroit and Pittsburg as an Indian trader;—that he carried on commerce till January 1776, when, for his attachment to our cause and the measures he had taken to promote it, he became obnoxious to the enemy, was seized by order of the governor of Detroit, was thrown into prison, and there continued till the beginning of May last, when he was sent to Quebec;—that on the ninth of October he escaped from thence and got into our settlements, through the aid of a French Cagnewaga who came with him here on Friday last.

I find Mr. Dodge an intelligent young man, intimately acquainted with all the tract of country between Pittsburg and Detroit, and with that lying on Lake Erie, also with most of the savage tribes in those parts, and with their languages. He is likewise well acquainted with the communication from Fort-Stanwix to Oswego and Niagara.

I believe Mr. Dodge's history to be true; and, from a variety of circumstances, I am persuaded of his firm attachment to us: and I would take the liberty to suggest to Congress that I think he may be of very important service to us in any enterprise we may undertake in the western quarter, or against the force on Lake Erie or Lake Ontario. This consideration, with that of his losses and sufferings which I am inclined to believe have been considerable, seems to make him worthy of notice and attention.—His information is good and clear in several points which I know myself, and in many others (from the manner in which he delivered it) far superior and much more satisfactory than what I have been able to derive from any other person.—As I have observed before, Mr. Dodge appears to me a valuable intelligencer; and, if Congress are pleased to honor him with an opportunity, he will give them an account of the posts of Detroit and Niagara when he left them, and of that at Michilimachinac,—of the enemy's naval force on Lakes Erie and Ontario, and of such other matters in Canada as he was able to inform himself of, either by his own observation or the relation of others.

General Gates supplied Mr. Dodge with some money to defray his expenses from Boston to this place, and I have advanced him to-day a hundred and fifty dollars more to carry him to Philadelphia.—I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

P. S. Mr. Dodge means to call on Major Butler of the light troops,

troops, with whom he says he is well acquainted. He also says he is extremely well acquainted with colonel Wood of Virginia, —but he is not in camp;—and he adds that he was at Pittsburg in 1775, when doctor Walker, Mr. Wilton, and Lewis Morris esquire, were there as commissioners, and engaged at that time to use his influence to keep the savages quiet, &c.

SIR,

Head-Quarters, Fredericksburg, Nov. 27. 1778.

I WAS yesterday honored with your favor of the twentieth, with its several inclosures.—Congress will be pleased to accept my acknowledgments for the communication of the treaties between his most christian majesty and the United States. The resolve respecting the exchange of prisoners has been transmitted to sir Henry Clinton, and I have appointed commissioners (if he thinks proper) to meet his at Amboy the seventh of next month.

I have the pleasure to inform Congress that the whole army (one brigade and the light corps excepted) is now in motion to the places of their respective cantonments for winter-quarters. I have thought it prudent to delay this event a while, to give time for the convention troops to make some progress in crossing the North-river, to prevent a possibility of accident. The third division passes this day; and, if no unexpected interruption happens, the whole will be over, the thirtieth instant. When their passage is completed, the remaining troops kept in the field will immediately retire to quarters.

The disposition for winter-quarters is as follows:—Nine brigades will be stationed on the west side of Hudson's river exclusive of the garrison at West-Point,—one of which (the North Carolina brigade) will be near Smith's Clove for the security of that pass, and as a reinforcement to West-Point in case of necessity; another (the Jersey brigade) will be at Elizabethtown, to cover the lower part of Jersey; and the other seven, consisting of the Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, and Pennsylvania troops, will be at Middlebrook.—Six brigades will be left on the east side of the river and at West-Point,—three of which (of the Massachusetts troops) will be stationed for the immediate defence of the Highlands; one at West-Point in addition to the garrison already there; and the other two at Fishkill and the Continental Village.—The remaining three brigades, composed of the New-Hampshire and Connecticut troops, and Hazen's regiment, will be posted in the vicinity of Danbury, for the protection of the country lying along the Sound,

to cover our magazines lying on Connecticut-river, and to aid the Highlands on any serious movement of the enemy that way.—The park of artillery will be at Pluckenim.—The cavalry will be disposed of thus:—Bland's regiment at Winchester in Virginia, Baylor's at Frederic or Hagarstown in Maryland, Moylan's at Lancaster in Pennsylvania, and Sheldon's at Durham in Connecticut. Lee's corps will be with that part of the army which is in the Jerseys acting on the advanced posts.—This comprehends the general distribution of the army, except Clinton's brigade of New-York troops, Pulaski's corps, and some detached regiments and corps stationed at Albany and at different parts of the frontier, of which Congress have already been particularly advised.—General Putnam will command at Danbury, General M'Dougal in the Highlands, and my own quarters will be in the Jerseys, in the neighborhood of Middlebrook.

This disposition appeared to me best calculated to conciliate as far as possible these several objects,—the protection of the country, the security of the important posts in the Highlands, the safety, discipline, and easy subsistence of the army.—To have kept the troops in a collected state would have increased infinitely the expense and difficulty of subsisting them, both with respect to forage and provisions: to have divided them into smaller cantonments would have made it far less practicable to maintain order and discipline among them, and would have put them less in a condition to control and prevent offensive operations on the side of the enemy, or to assemble to take advantage of any favorable opening which their future situation may offer, should they be obliged to weaken themselves by further detachments so far as to invite an enterprise against them.

By the estimate of the quarter-master and commissary-general, it appears indispensable to have the principal part of the army on the other side of the North-river. It was thought impracticable to furnish the necessary supplies of flour for the whole, on this side the river, from the immense difficulty and expense of transportation in the winter season, and from the exhausted state of the country with respect to forage.—As this subject has been already fully before Congress, I shall not trouble them with a repetition of the detail.—In order as much as possible to reduce the demand of forage and facilitate the supplies, I have given directions, when the several divisions arrive at their cantonments, to send away to convenient places at a distance from them all the horses not absolutely requisite to carry on the ordinary business of the army.

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It is unnecessary to add that the troops must again have recourse to the expedient of hutting as they did last year. But, as they are now well clad, and we have had more leisure to make some little preparations for winter-quarters, I hope they will be in a more comfortable situation than they were in the preceding winter.—With the highest respect and esteem, I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

Sir,

Elizabethtown, December 4, 1778.

BETWEEN Fredericksburg and this place where I arrived yesterday afternoon, I had the honor to receive your excellency's several favors of the twenty-sixth, twenty-seventh, and twenty-eighth, in due order, with their several inclosures, which shall have my attention. My being on the road from the time of their coming to hand till yesterday prevented me from acknowledging them before.

As many inconveniences would attend the removing of the sick officers and men of the convention troops by land, and the officers having families, I have written to general Gates to permit them to proceed to the falls of James'-river by water, on the officers' giving their paroles that they and the men will perform the voyage. I have also acquainted him of the meeting in contemplation for an exchange of prisoners, that the officers may not leave Boston till the result is known.

With respect to major De Passern of the regiment of Hesse-Hanau, I hope he may be released by an exchange; after which, it will remain with him to obtain liberty from sir Henry Clinton to return to Europe. But if the exchange in agitation should not take place, I should be happy if Congress themselves would decide whether he is to be allowed his request.—If on my permission he should go to Europe without application to and the consent of the British commander (which seems to be his intention), the enemy might not think themselves bound upon a future occasion to account for him.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

Sir,

Elizabethtown, December 5, 1778.

I HAVE the honor to address you by command of his excellency, who went from this place at four o'clock this morning in consequence of advice received last night that fifty-two vessels great and small, including a bomb-ketch, with troops on board, had the day before yesterday, moved up the North-river

as

as far as Cloyster-landing, and yesterday morning got under way and were proceeding farther up. He proposed to make his first stage at Acquakenuk, and to proceed as his future intelligence might require. He is much at a loss to determine the design of the enemy, but thinks it may either have respect to the forts in the Highlands or to the convention troops.

When he left Peekskill, the two Massachusetts brigades, on their march thither from Hartford, were not arrived, so that the troops on the spot were only the original garrison of West-Point, and Nixon's brigade which lay near the Continental Village: but, without the most inexplicable delay, those must have reached their destination some days since. If so, and the enemy should meditate a stroke against West-Point, they will probably fail in it unless there should be something like a surprise.—The general also thinks it probable that the Maryland division were yesterday evening at the Clove. Their instructions were, to communicate with West-Point and reinforce it on any emergency. They were, in addition to them, directed last night by express to move immediately towards the forts, divested of baggage and artillery, for the more speedy communication.—The Carolina brigade has been some time stationed at the entrance of the Clove.

One brigade of the Virginia troops is at Pompton, and the other two were expected to reach Springfield yesterday. The Pennsylvania troops, it is supposed, would be at Acquakenuk or in the neighborhood of Paramus.—These troops, immediately on receiving the present intelligence, were ordered to halt; and his excellency is gone forward to regulate their movements according to circumstances.—The brigade in this town is ordered to hold itself in readiness.

If the convention troops should be their object, 'tis probable the attempt will be too late to answer any purpose: the rear division was to cross the North-river on wednesday last, but must certainly have done it on thursday; the front must be not far from the Delaware; and the whole too far advanced to be subject to a risque. Added to this, there is a pretty strong guard with each division. His excellency however has sent on the intelligence to colonel Bland who directs their march, urging him to hasten them forward with all possible dispatch.

One brigade of Connecticut troops was at Danbury, the other at Fredericksburg, when we came away; and general Poor's was in full march for the former, and must long since have arrived.

I have the honor to be, &c. R. H. HARRISON.

P. S. Your excellency will excuse this hurried scrawl.

Para-

SIR, *Paramus, December 7, 1778.*

I HAD the honor of receiving yours of the second at this place.—I have forwarded the brevet to captain Simonet; and shall take such measures in regard to colonel Fleury's letter as shall seem proper, upon my arrival at Middlebrook for which I shall set out again to-morrow.

Upon leaving Elizabethtown I directed colonel Harrison to inform you of the intelligence I had received, and which I thought demanded my personal attention, as the enemy appeared to be going up the river in considerable force. Having put the troops destined for the Middlebrook cantonment upon their march back towards the North-river, I was proceeding that way myself when an express met me a few miles from this, informing me that the enemy's shipping, which had been as high as King's ferry, had fallen down again. They landed a party at the ferry, and set fire to a few small buildings near the water: but, upon a party of ours advancing, they immediately [*re-embarked*] without attempting any thing further.—The boats and stores of every kind had been previously secured.—I cannot account for this manœuvre but by supposing that they had been misinformed as to the quantity of stores at the ferry, or that they expected to find the posts in a defenceless situation; or it may perhaps have been to favor a forage below.

Finding that the troops destined for the defence of the Highlands had arrived at their respective posts agreeable to my orders and expectations, I have again put those intended for Middlebrook into motion; and I hope they will arrive there while the roads and weather are both fine.

Accounts from New-York through a good channel inform me that thirty thousand tons of shipping had been suddenly taken up for government service, and that a general embargo is laid. The occasion has not yet transpired; at least it has not yet reached me.—I have the honor to be, &c. G. W.

SIR, *Head-Quarters, Middlebrook, Dec. 13, 1778.*

SINCE my last of the seventh, I have been honored with your favors of the fifth, sixth, and eighth instant, with their inclosures, to which the proper attention shall be paid.—I have made the report of the committee on Canada affairs the subject of a particular letter which I have the honor of transmitting by this conveyance.—I have the honor to be, &c. G. W.

P. S. Lieutenant-colonels Harrison and Hamilton went to Amboy on monday last to meet the British commissioners: but the

the weather had been so extremely bad that they had not met on Friday.

Sir, *Head-Quarters, Middlebrook, Dec. 13, 1778.*

IT has not been in my power to return an answer to your favor of the sixth instant till now. The letter met me on the road, separated from my papers; and I did not reach this place till late on the eleventh, since which I have been much employed in attending to the dispositions for hutting the army: but in the mean time the objects of the dispatch have engaged my utmost attention.

The earnest desire I have to pay the strictest compliance in every instance with the views and instructions of Congress cannot but make me feel the greatest uneasiness when I find myself in circumstances of hesitation or doubt with respect to their directions. But the perfect confidence I have in the justice and candor of that honorable body emboldens me to communicate without reserve the difficulties which occur in the execution of their present order; and the indulgence I have experienced on every former occasion induces me to imagine that the liberty I now take will not meet with their disapprobation.

I have attentively taken up the report of the committee of the fifth (approved by Congress) on the subject of my letter of the eleventh ultimo on the proposed expedition into Canada: I have considered it in several lights, and sincerely regret that I should feel myself under any embarrassment in carrying it into execution. Still I remain of opinion, from a general review of things and the state of our resources, that no extensive system of co-operation with the French, for the complete emancipation of Canada, can be positively decided on for the ensuing year.—To propose a plan of perfect co-operation with a foreign power without a moral certainty in our supplies, and to have that plan actually ratified with the court of Versailles, might be attended, in case of failure in the conditions on our part, with very fatal effects.

If I should seem unwilling to transmit the plan as prepared by Congress, with my observations, it is because I find myself under a necessity (in order to give our minister sufficient ground to found an application on) to propose something more than a vague and indecisive plan, which, even in the event of a total evacuation of these states by the enemy, may be rendered impracticable in the execution by a variety of insurmountable obstacles: or if I retain my present sentiments and act consistently,

I must

I must point out the difficulties as they appear to me; which must embarrass his negotiations, and may disappoint the views of Congress.

But proceeding on the idea of the enemy's leaving these states before the active part of the ensuing campaign, I should fear to hazard a mistake as to the precise aim and extent of the views of Congress. The line of conduct that I am to observe in writing to our minister at the court of France does not appear sufficiently delineated:—were I to undertake it, I should be much afraid of erring through misconception. In this dilemma I would esteem it a particular favor to be excused from writing at all on the subject, especially as it is the part of candor in me to acknowledge that I do not see my way clear enough to point out such a plan for co-operation as I conceive to be consistent with the ideas of Congress, and that will be sufficiently explanatory with respect to time and circumstances, to give efficacy to the measure. But if Congress still think it necessary for me to proceed in the business, I must request their more definitive and explicit instructions, and that they will permit me, previous to transmitting the intended dispatches, to submit them to their determination.

I could wish to lay before Congress more minutely the state of the army, the condition of our supplies, and the requisites necessary for carrying into execution an undertaking that may involve the most serious events. If Congress think this can be done more satisfactorily in a personal conference, I hope to have the army in such a situation before I can receive their answer, as to afford me an opportunity of giving my attendance.—I would only add that I shall cheerfully comply with the directions of Congress relative to making every preparation in our power for an expedition against Niagara, and for such further operations to the northward as time and circumstances shall enable us to carry on. Measures for the purpose have been taken in part for some time past; and I shall pursue them vigorously. The subject has long engaged my contemplation; and I am thoroughly convinced of the expediency and policy of doing every thing practicable on our part, for giving security to our frontiers by the reduction of those places which facilitate annoying them, and even for accomplishing the annexation of Canada to the Union.—

I have the honor to be, &c.

P. S. I have detained the letter to the marquis till your further instructions. The waters have been so high as to prevent the express setting out yesterday with this dispatch as was intended.

To His Excellency John Jay, President of Congress.

SIR, *Head-Quarters, Middlebrook, Dec. 13, 1778.*

IN a letter which I had the honor of receiving from Congress, dated the second instant, was inclosed the copy of one from lieutenant-colonel Fleury, upon the subject of which, the president desired me to express "my sentiments, as also of the merits of Mr. Fleury during his services in the army."

I do not conceive that Congress should request a renewal of colonel Fleury's furlough from the French minister plenipotentiary. An application of that kind ought, in my opinion, to be made by himself, not only because it is customary, but because solicitations of a similar nature would in all probability be made by many not having Mr. Fleury's claim to the favor of the public, and to whom it would be difficult to give a refusal after a precedent had been established. I would not be understood to include the case of general Du Portail and the gentlemen in the engineering department, who are peculiarly circumstanced, and in whose behalf I have written particularly to Congress.

As to Mr. Fleury's merits as an officer, I can only repeat what I have upon several occasions mentioned to Congress before,—that he is brave, active, and intelligent, and that, should he obtain leave to remain in America, I shall take an opportunity (agreeable to my promise to him) of employing him in a manner suitable to his rank, and in such a way as will not clash with the officers of the line.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR, *Head-Quarters, Middlebrook, Dec. 16, 1778.*

SINCE I had the honor of addressing you on the thirteenth, the gentlemen appointed to meet commissioners from sir Henry Clinton have returned to camp. Your excellency will find, by a copy of their report, No. 7, (which, with the other papers respecting the meeting, is inclosed) that an exchange of prisoners has not taken place.

As an exchange has not been effected, and sir Henry Clinton has called for all our officers on parole, I shall, in consequence of the resolution of the nineteenth ultimo, order the commissary of prisoners to require the immediate return of the convention

convention and any other officers with the enemy on parole. I do not mean however to include general Burgoyne in the demand unless Congress should direct it, as there appears to me many political reasons for permitting him to remain in Britain in his present temper. But if Congress should differ from me in opinion on this point, I shall be happy to be informed, that measures may be pursued for his recall.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

SIR,

Philadelphia, Dec. 31, 1778.

I HAD the honor of addressing Congress some time since on the subject of general Du Portail and the gentlemen with him. He informs me that his affair has not yet been decided, and is extremely anxious that it should be in some way or other. He assigns many powerful reasons to shew that it is very interesting to him (if he is not to continue in our service) to return to France as speedily as possible. He also informs me that he has reason to think, in the consideration of his affair, the retaining him in service and the adopting the plan proposed in his memoir are united, and the decision of the one suspended on that of the other; and has therefore requested me to represent to Congress that he should be happy they could be considered separately; and if his services, abstractedly from the project proposed by him, are deemed necessary, it will be agreeable to him to remain in the country.

I have already taken the liberty to offer my sentiments on the propriety of engaging these gentlemen to continue in the service. It really appears to me that they will be essentially necessary to our future operations, whether defensive or offensive; and it cannot therefore but give me pleasure if it shall be consistent with the views of Congress to retain them, and to give every encouragement which they may reasonably expect.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

